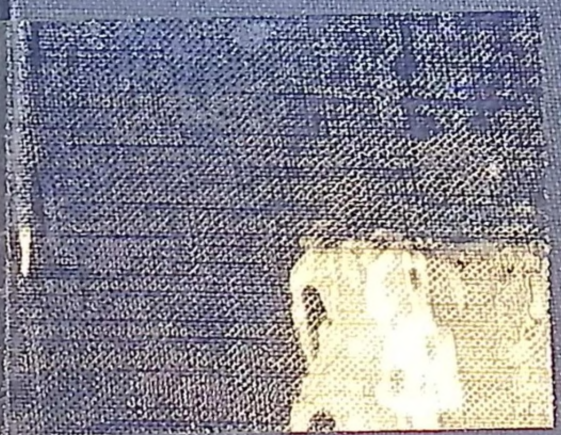

Christian Faith and The Spirit of the Age

CLARENCE EDWARD MACARTNEY, D.D.

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY
TWENTY-ONE WEST FORTY-SIXTH STREET
New York

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY VIRGINIA

COPYRIGHT, 1940
BY
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

RD
55
M116
C

CONTENTS

PAGE

Publisher's Preface 5

Foreword 7

PART ONE

The Christian Book 9

The Divine Origin of the Bible. The Inspiration of the Bible. The Bible Confirmed by the Ruins and Monuments. The Credibility of the Four Gospels. The Gospels and the Miracles. The Fulfilled Predictions of the Bible.

PART TWO

The Christian Way 107

The Way, the Oldest Name for the Church. The Ethics of Christ have not been Improved Upon. Christ's Law of Forgiveness. No Teaching of Christ has become Obsolete. The Present Day Attack upon Christian Ethics. The Non-Christian Conception of Man. False Ideas of Freedom. Christianity and the Moving Pictures. Marriage and Divorce. What of the Future?

PART THREE

The Christian Act 143

The Death of Christ the greatest of all Themes. Christianity a Religion of Redemption. The Death of Christ the Eternal Act; the Reconciling Act; the Guarding and Keeping Act; the Key to Life's Mystery; the Conquering Act.

PART FOUR

The Christian Destiny 185

Faith in Immortality Exalts and Dignifies the Present Life. Popular Indifference to the Future Life. Only they know Duty who know Destiny. The Darkness of Life without Hope for the Future. The New Heaven and the New Earth. Heaven as a Place and Heaven as a State. The Organ of our Life in the World to Come, or, The Spiritual Body. The Possible Occupations of the Life to Come.

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

The officers of the American Tract Society have become thoroughly convinced that there is an urgent, widespread and imperative need of scholarly, up-to-date, popular treatises on the essential evangelical doctrines. They are equally convinced that there are many conservative Christian leaders with the intellectual acumen and literary ability amply qualified to prepare such treatises with convincing persuasiveness and dynamic efficiency.

The Society therefore recently announced a Prize Book Contest requesting manuscripts, subject to certain conditions, on the fundamental principles of the Christian faith and offering prizes amounting to seventeen hundred and fifty dollars. The results of the contest have absolutely verified and justified the Society's contention, for one hundred and sixteen excellent manuscripts were submitted by widely known and distinguished writers.

Thirteen specially selected manuscripts are now being published.

The officers of the Society are not only highly gratified by the response received, but now feel fully justified in their determination to make the Society the repository of the choicest, most scholarly and popular books on gospel truth. Fortunately this decision has been made at a time when the world's need of an unadulterated and dynamic gospel is more in evidence than for many centuries.

The gospel of Christ is the only force which can save the world.

FOREWORD

This book is brief, for in spite of the enormous size of some of the recent popular works of fiction, the author believes that in the field of religion and morals the brief book is much more likely to be read than the lengthy book.

The book is addressed to the general public, and therefore, although the meditations of philosophers and the conclusions of scholars and experts in the field of Biblical and theological studies are cited and examined, the language is never technical. The purpose of the book is to examine Christian faith in the light of the spirit of the present age, and to mark and describe some of the influences which are adverse to the great conceptions of historic Christianity.

"A little philosophy," wrote Francis Bacon, "withdraws us from religion, but a good deal of philosophy brings us back to it again." Much is spoken, written and done against Christianity today. But still, as of old, the great voices of Time, Experience, Conscience, and Common Sense, all speak on the side of Christian faith.

THE AUTHOR.

Part One

THE CHRISTIAN BOOK

I.

THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE

The first great question of religion is this: Has God come out of the silence and the darkness and spoken a word to man? And if He has so spoken, do we possess a trustworthy account of what God has spoken? The answer of the Christian Church in every age has been that God has so spoken, and that in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament we have a credible record of what God has said to man.

If we believe in God, it follows that we believe that God could, if He would, reveal Himself and His will to man. Even Thomas Paine, in *The Age of Reason,* a book written to discredit the Bible, says: "Revelation when applied to religion means something immediately communicated by God to man. No one will deny or dispute the power of the Almighty to make such a communication if He pleases." A revelation, then, on the part of God is possible, and, so far as man is concerned, is certainly desirable. The history of a single life, or city, or nation, sadly and earnestly declares that man needs a light and a guide on his way through this world. When it comes to the great questions of immortality, duty, and destiny, unless God shall teach us,

we can know nothing. The alternative to a divine revelation is man's experience and man's reason, and even Robert Ingersoll declared, "Man's reason is a flickering torch, borne on a starless night, and blown by the winds of prejudice and passion." In spite of all our theories and guesses and deductions from past experience, man is without knowledge and without hope unless God has spoken.

The Bible claims to be a divine revelation, and waiving for the moment the question of whether or not this claim is well founded, the Bible certainly contains in it everything that one would think of putting into a record of a supposed revelation from God. If one were to forge a revelation today and foist it upon mankind, he would certainly have in such a book some account of the beginning of things and the end of things. He would put there, also, the story of how sin and death and sorrow came into the world, together with some maxims for daily conduct, the sketch of a plan for man's deliverance from the cares and troubles of this life, and some assurance as to what happens after death. All this we find in the Bible, and whether or not it is a revelation of God, it certainly contains those teachings which, so far as our reason can go, a revelation from God ought to contain.

We hear much spoken today and read much written to discredit the Bible and destroy men's faith in it as a book from God. In what follows it will be my purpose to set down a few of those considerations which help men to keep their faith in the Bible as the Word

of God. What we shall do is to look into the Bible itself and find what is there of a nature to uphold and confirm the belief that the Bible comes from God. We recognize the fact that man had his part in the production of the books of the Bible, that if God has made a revelation, He made it to men who spoke it to their fellowmen and also recorded it for the benefit of future generations. The human part in the production of the Bible we all grant. What we are asking now is this: Can the Bible be accounted for by *merely* human agencies and sources? If not, what is there about the Bible which makes us think it has a divine origin?

1. *The History of the Bible.* If there is no book like it for widespread acceptance and reverence and influence, there is certainly no book like it for its strange history. The Bible today is the one catholic and universal book. Its pages are read in the dialect of every family of human speech. But what could have seemed more unlikely at first? For centuries the Bible, as the Old Testament, was the sacred Book of an insignificant number of people, belonging to a small and a despised race, dwelling between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean. Then the strange thing happened. The smaller portion of the Bible, the New Testament, was added to the Old in the first century after Christ; and then this book, like a river suddenly swollen by the rains, spread beyond its historic banks and limitations and flowed throughout the whole earth. The New Testament carried with it the Old Testament and yet was based upon and constantly appealed to the

divine authority of the Old Testament; whereas the Old Testament was interpreted by the New. In this sudden expansion of the Bible we discern a history which it is very difficult to explain save on the ground that we are dealing with a book and a history which is more than merely human.

2. *The Unity of the Bible.* Another remarkable thing about the Bible is its unity. At first it seems more like a congeries of books than a single book. These sixty-six books were written by thirty and more authors through a millennium and a half of time. Some of the authors were highly educated men, like Moses and St. Paul, while others were herdsmen and fishermen. The sixty-six books represent almost every form of writing and composition, history, predictions, biographies, soliloquies, odes, dramas, hymns, maxims, and codes of law. Yet in this collection of books, written at different periods of history, and by so many different authors, we discover unity, harmony, and order. The book commences at the beginning and ends with the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. Its one grand theme is the redemption of man from the power of sin and death, and its one predominant personality is the Lord Jesus Christ. To Him all parts of the Bible bear witness. This unity, when you think of it, is very remarkable. There are no sixty-six books in Greek or Roman literature, or in the literature of any people of the past, which, collected by scholars and bound together in one volume, would have in them the slightest thread of unity, connection,

or sequence. Whatever such sixty-six books might be, nothing could be more absurd than to speak of them as the Book, or as having logical and vital relationship one to the other. Yet this unity we discover in the Bible. One of the most beautiful of English cathedrals, and the longest but one in the world, is Winchester Cathedral. In pleasing contrast with so many of the cathedrals which rise abruptly out of sordid and commercial environment, the cathedral of Winchester stands in a spacious park and the approach to it is by an avenue shadowed by ancient elm trees. When you enter that great cathedral, you see a building which is majestic in its proportions and beautiful in its unity. Yet the cathedral was not built in a single year, nor in a decade, nor in a century. Generations of artisans toiled upon its foundations and walls; successive centuries have seen part added to part, until at length all stood complete—nave, transept, choir, crypt, chapels, soaring arches, glorious windows, and aspiring pinnacles. So we enter the Bible as one enters the nave of an ancient cathedral. We are conscious of the fact that different parts belong to different ages and had different hands for their builders. Moses wrought in his age; David in his; Isaiah and Jeremiah in their time; Matthew and Luke and Peter and John and Paul in their day and generation. Yet the Bible, like the cathedral, is one.

3. *The Contents of the Bible.* (a) Predictions. Speaking of the prophecies of the Bible, Pascal, a great mathematician and a great theologian, in his

Thoughts, says: "The greatest of the proofs of Jesus Christ are the prophecies. They are also what God has the most provided for, for the event which has fulfilled them is a miracle which has subsisted from the birth of the church even to the end."

(b) The Doctrines of the Bible. In the Nineteenth Psalm the Psalmist sings of how the heavens declare the glory of God. The belief that the heavens were made by God is confirmed by their glory. He affirms the same thing concerning the law of God, or the Bible as it existed in his day. "The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul." If the Bible is a book from God, then the contents of the Bible ought to bear witness to their origin. Let us therefore consider some of the great teachings of the Bible and see whether or not they substantiate the Bible's claim of a divine origin.

We commence with the idea of God. In the words of a famous definition, "God is a Spirit, Infinite, Eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." This sublime definition is possible only because it is derived from what the Bible tells us of God. As Dr. F. L. Patton says in his book on *The Inspiration of the Scriptures:* "The Bible representation of God is unique, equally removed from the superstition which peoples hill and dale with deities, and the skepticism which locks the universe in the arms of fate. It teaches of one ever present over-ruling Spirit." What is true of this idea of God is true also of the scriptural teaching of Christ, that in Him are two distinct natures and one Person

forever; and also the doctrine of the Trinity, that the Father is God, that the Son is God, and that the Holy Spirit is God, and yet that these three Persons are one God.

Then there is the Christian teaching of the Atonement, that by the death of Christ on the Cross a complete work of justice and yet of mercy was done, whereby God punishes sin as borne by Christ the Sin-bearer, and yet at the same time makes it possible to show mercy to all who repent and believe. There are doctrines too, taught in the Bible which cannot be reconciled by the human mind. The Bible teaches predestination in one verse and free agency in another. Yet no human mind can reduce them to unity. It is easy enough to build a religious system on either, but Christianity builds upon both. It is difficult to see how these truths which have tasked the faith of believers in every age could have suggested themselves to a merely human speculator as true. "We can account for their existence in Scriptures only on the supposition that they come from God and that the discrepancies disappear in a unity which is above us and out of sight."

The Ten Commandments are given as a law of life and conduct, and nowhere in the Bible is anything taught which conflicts with those great principles of conduct. The Bible records much that is evil and wicked and vile, but never in such a way as to give the slightest idea that what is recorded is regarded as anything other than sinful and deserving of punishment. An example of this is the way the triple and

terrible sin and crime of David is recorded.

When John Locke, celebrated English philosopher, was asked to write a book on ethics, he first started to do so, and then gave up the project, saying: "The Gospel contains so perfect a body of ethics that reason may be excused from that inquiry since she may find man's duty clearer and easier in revelation than in herself." In the epitaph which he prepared for his tomb at Marshfield, Massachusetts, Daniel Webster said:

"Lord I believe. Help Thou mine unbelief. Philosophical argument, especially that drawn from the vastness of the universe in comparison with the apparent insignificance of this globe, has sometimes shaken my reason for the faith that is in me; but my heart has always assured me and reassured me that the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be a Divine reality. The Sermon on the Mount cannot be a mere human production. This belief enters into the very depth of my conscience. The whole history of man proves it."

Another remarkable thing about the Bible is its doctrine of a spiritual kingdom of righteousness into which all of God's people will be gathered. This goes far beyond any human thought or dream, such as Plato's *Ideal Republic* or Thomas Brown's *Utopia.* It is to be a commonwealth of virtue and of faith with Christ as King.

(c) The Omissions of the Bible. Nor should we forget to mention the omissions of the Bible. How strange at first is the Bible's incuriosity as to the future

life, and the silence of the Gospels concerning the childhood of Jesus. So remarkable is the absence of the teaching of immortality from the books of Moses that Bishop Warburton took the position that this omission was an evidence of the divine origin of the Pentateuch, for only a divinely guided author and especially one who like Moses was acquainted with all the lore and eschatology of the Egyptians would ever have omitted teachings as to the future life in books written for the guidance of a nation.[1] The Bible is singularly silent too as to the crash and roar of great world events, saying nothing of the movements of empires and kingdoms, save as they touch upon the life and destiny of God's chosen people. In this respect the Bible is as silent as the stars which look down upon a battlefield. Yet on the other hand there are certain kingdoms the existence of which is known today only because of their mention in the Bible.

Another thing that we must account for in the Bible is its majestic style. Almost anybody can tell in a moment whether a passage read is from the Bible or from another author, such as Shakespeare, Milton or Bacon. The difference is not merely that of the English style nor in the style of the original writings, the Greek and the Hebrew. It is a difference which can be accounted for only by the urge and surge of great God-given moral and spiritual ideas.

We have seen then that the study of the Bible discloses nothing in it unworthy of a divine origin; where-

1. Warburton, William, *Divine Legation of Moses.*

as it discovers a great deal which is in keeping with the divine origin; and not only in keeping with it but which demands it.

4. *The Influence of the Bible.* If the Bible is a book from God, it ought not only to show such origin by its contents, but also by its influence. If it contains God's Word, then wherever the Bible has been known and read and believed it ought to have rebuked vice, encouraged virtue, inspired faith, and comforted man with hope. The Bible triumphantly meets this test. Some years ago I paid a visit to our sister republic of Mexico. As soon as I crossed the tawny Rio Grande, it seemed that time had run back for a thousand years. Mexico is a sick nation, sick physically, sick morally. The difference between the two republics cannot be accounted for by political institutions, the dissemination of science or compulsory education. It goes back of all that. The difference is explained by the difference between a republic whose founders, when their ship dropped anchor in Cape Cod, lifted up their faces to the wintry skies and opening their Bibles sang the One Hundredth Psalm, and a nation whose founders, hot in their search for gold, when they landed on the shores of Mexico, raised the banners of their kingdom and their religion and chanted the Salve Regina. It is the difference between a republic in which the Bible has been opened in home, church, and schoolhouse, where the Bible has been the inspiration of daily life and conduct and the fountain of civil and religious liberty, and a nation where those

who declared its saving truths were cast into prison, stoned through the streets, or driven into exile. The difference between the United States of America and the United States of Mexico is a difference between a nation with and without the Bible.

In 1808, an American whaler landed at Pitcairn Island in the remote South Seas. There they found an ideal commonwealth presided over by one Alexander Smith, the sole survivor of the mutineers on the British ship, *Bounty.* After these mutineers had set their captain and officers adrift in an open boat they established themselves together with a number of native women on Pitcairn Island. There, having destroyed their ship so as to leave no trace of their crime, they gave themselves over to every conceivable vice and abomination. At length Alexander Smith was the sole white survivor in the midst of a half-breed community as corrupt as Sodom and Gomorrah. But one day this sailor began to think about his own future and the future of those with whom he lived. Rummaging through a sailor's chest he came upon a Bible. Any book would have been a great discovery but the book he found was a Bible. This Bible henceforth became the textbook of instruction and the standard for moral conduct. In a comparatively few years the Bible had transformed this tropical Gomorrah into a community where there were no illiterates, thieves, liars, drunkards, profane swearers, adulterers or murderers, and in which there was no prison, no hospital, no insane asylum, because there was no need for them. The Bible found in the sailor's

chest did the work. Thus the Bible has been used by the Holy Spirit of God to transform and regenerate human nature.

Whether we look at the history and unity of the Bible, or consider its contents and teachings, or follow the record of its influence and see how wherever it has entered, it has brought life and light and has been the salt which has preserved from corruption, we are confronted by a great effect which demands a correspondingly great cause. Where but in the Divine mind and purpose shall we find that sufficient cause?

II.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

If God chose to reveal truth to man for his guidance and salvation, it is altogether reasonable to suppose that He would have taken steps to secure a trustworthy account of that revelation. Since God is almighty, He could have repeated and renewed what He had revealed by a new revelation for each succeeding generation. But since God works through human instrumentalities the method of once giving a revelation and then securing its infallible record is more natural and just as effective.

By a revelation we mean the truth communicated to man by God. In popular language, inspiration is often made to mean the same thing as revelation. But in our present discussion we shall think of inspiration as the means which God took to secure for the instruction of mankind a trustworthy record of what He had spoken or what He had done. In some cases one and the same person received the revelation and also the inspiration to speak or write what was revealed. This was true of Moses who received the law from God and also recorded it and of John who had a revelation on Patmos and wrote the record of it, and to a certain degree of

St. Paul, who says he received his Gospel by a revelation and taught that revelation by words not of man, but given him by the Holy Spirit.

The Bible is true and credible, the great acts and words of God therein recorded are true. This is a foundation belief of the Christian religion. Ultimately, Christianity stands or falls with the truth or falsehood of the Bible. But we must be careful when we say that the doctrine of the *way* in which God secured a record of His revelation is a fundamental belief. For example, Christianity was established as a working, redeeming, and historic fact in the world for many years before the record of the beginning of the Church and the spread of the Gospel was recorded in the New Testament. That which came first cannot be said to depend upon that which came afterwards. This is well put by two eminent students of the Bible, when they say, "Nor should we ever allow it to be believed that the truth of Christianity depends upon any doctrine of inspiration whatever. Revelation came in large part before the record of it, and the Christian Church before the New Testament Scriptures. Christianity would be true and divine, and being so, would stand, even if God had not pleased to give in addition to His revelation of saving truths an infallible record of that revelation, absolutely errorless, by means of inspiration." After the same manner Dr. Francis L. Patton in his *Inspiration of the Scriptures,* says: "It is proper for us to bear in mind the immense argumentative advantage which Christianity has aside altogether from the

inspiration of the documents on which it rests. If on simple historical testimony it can be proved that Jesus wrought miracles, uttered prophecies, and proclaimed His divinity—if it can be shown that He was crucified to redeem sinners, that He rose again from the dead, and that He made the destiny of men to hinge on their acceptance of Him as their Saviour—then, whether the records which contain these truths be inspired or not, woe unto him who neglects so great a salvation."

It will be clear from a reading of the Bible that there must have been some difference in the kinds of inspiration to which the writers were subjected. A very good classification has been suggested as follows: Superintendence, Elevation, and Suggestion. By Superintendence, we mean a divine guidance in the narration of facts and a guidance in the selection of the facts to be related. As an actor himself in stirring scenes of the Exodus, Moses did not need a divine revelation when he came to write down those great events. Neither did St. Luke, as an actor in many of the scenes of Paul's life, such as his shipwreck, require a revelation when he came to narrate those events. All that they needed was divine superintendence and guidance, invigorating mind and memory. As we saw in our study of the divine origin of the Bible, one of the most remarkable things about the book is its omissions. John says, speaking with rhetorical license, that the world itself would not contain the books, if an attempt were made to write down everything Christ said and did. The problem of selection is the first problem of a writer or a speaker and the

success of his book or his speech depends to a great degree upon how that problem is solved. The marvel is the way in which the writers of the Four Gospels solved the problem. How much is left untold, and yet how complete and satisfying are the things which are told.

A second kind of inspiration is Elevation. There are parts of the Bible which contain no narration of past events, no prediction of future events, no declaration of the way of salvation, but in which there is beautiful and sublime expression of moral and spiritual truth. The difference between the production of the highest human genius and the sayings for example, of Job, or the Book of Psalms, or some of the prophets, can be accounted for only by the belief that the sublime elevation of thought and utterance in the Bible on these moral and spiritual themes is the effect of the Holy Spirit, working on the minds of the authors.

A third, and the highest kind of inspiration, is Suggestion. It is obvious that the predictions of the Bible must have been suggested to the mind of the prophets by God. No man, however trained, guided, or elevated in mind, can unlock the door of tomorrow. This is true also, of the distinctive Christian doctrines, such as God, the Person of Christ, the Trinity, and the Atonement. Then there are passages where the writer ascribes motives to men and assigns reasons for the divine acts. How, for example, could Moses have known how Pharaoh felt when he heard of the escape of Israel? *(Exodus 14:5.)* Or how did the chronicler know that Saul died in battle for the transgressions which he had

committed against the Lord? *(I Chronicles 10:13.)* Matthew records of the woman with the issue healed by Christ, that she said within herself, "If I may but touch His garment, I shall be made whole." How did Matthew know what the woman thought or what was in her heart? These passages must be sheer imagination or baseless forgeries, *unless* they contain the record of a divine suggestion and communication.

1. *The Claims of the Old Testament to Inspiration.* Large portions of the Old Testament are prefaced by such statements as, "Thus saith the Lord," or "God said," or similar utterances. One has counted as many as twenty-four hundred passages in which divine authorship, guidance or superintendence is claimed. There are thirteen hundred such passages in the prophets alone. There can be no question that these passages at least, claim to be the result of inspiration.

The New Testament refers to the Old Testament as the "Scriptures" fifty-nine times and always in a manner which implies the inspiration, and therefore the complete authority of the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul said, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and Peter, that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The author of the Letter to the Hebrews begins by saying that God at sundry and in divers manners spake unto the fathers by the prophets. Indeed, in some places the word "Scripture is substituted for God, when reference is made to the Old Testament; for example, the passage in Romans 9:17, where it is written, "The Scripture saith unto Pharaoh."

The testimony of Jesus to the authority and inspiration of the Old Testament cannot be questioned. In his encounter with the devil, He fell back upon the Book of Deuteronomy, saying three times, "It is written." When He was asked about marriage and divorce, He said, "Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female?" His whole argument is based upon the authority of the Book of Genesis. Repeatedly, He refers to some event in His life as taking place because the Scriptures must be fulfilled. This could be said only if they were regarded as the Word of God. When He spake with His disciples after His resurrection, He reminded them how He had told them that all the things written in the Old Testament concerning Him must be fulfilled. And to the two with whom He talked on the way to Emmaus, He said, "Oh fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." He said to the Scribes and Pharisees that David in the 110th Psalm called Him, "Lord," by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. When the Jews rebuked Him and were ready to stone Him, because He made Himself equal with God, Christ, arguing from the less to the greater, quoted the 82nd Psalm, saying, "If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came . . . Say ye of him, whom the Father has sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" The argument here is that if God could apply the term "gods" to human judges and rulers, then certainly Christ, who was sent and sanctified of God, could call Himself the Son of God. The

bearing that this has on the inspiration of the Old Testament is the parenthetical clause which Christ introduces in the midst of His citation of the Psalm, and in which He says, "And the Scripture cannot be broken." This shows very clearly His thought of the inspiration of the Old Testament. In another place Christ bases His argument upon the use by the Old Testament of a single word, a verb in the present tense. He had been asked about the resurrection of the dead. His answer was, "Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." *(Matthew 22:31-32.)* Three things about which the Jews were very jealous were the Temple, the Sabbath, and the Scriptures. They charged Christ with disloyal sayings concerning the Temple and the Sabbath, but never once did they find fault with Christ for His views concerning the Old Testament.

2. *The Claims of the New Testament to Inspiration.* Here it must be admitted the situation is a little different from that which obtains in the Old Testament. The writers of the Four Gospels for example, do not explicitly claim divine inspiration. Luke commences by telling of his researches and his original sources after the fashion of any careful historian. The only book which directly claims inspiration for itself, and for the whole of it, is the Book of Revelation.

But if God took pains to secure by inspiration a trustworthy record of His revelation in Old Testament times,

it is certainly reasonable to think that He would have taken equal pains to secure by inspiration a trustworthy account of the establishment of the Christian Church. As the years passed by, and one by one the contemporaries of Jesus disappeared, the great advantage of a written as well as an oral tradition, would be clearly seen. Take the case of St. John. His Gospel is composed for the greater part of long discourses by Jesus, such as his argument with the Jewish rulers and his beautiful farewell address to the disciples. John wrote this Gospel it is now generally agreed, towards the close of the first century, and when he was a very old man. To say that he remembered verbatim, or even as to the sequence of thought, these wonderful discourses of Jesus which he so carefully records, would mean that a great miracle had been wrought. But if God provided for the recording of these words of Jesus by inspiration, we can see how it was possible. Indeed, this was distinctly promised to the disciples by Christ in His last address, where he says, "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." *(John 14:26.)*

St. Paul declares that the Gospel which he preached to the Galatians, the same which he preached everywhere, came to him by a revelation of Jesus Christ. *(Galatians 1:12)* and that in teaching it he had the help of the Holy Spirit, for he says, "Which things also we speak, *not* in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." In one of his letters,

Peter seems to recognize the Epistles of Paul as equal in authority with the Old Testament Scriptures, for he speaks of how the unlearned and the unstable wrest the writings of Paul, as they do also the "*other* Scriptures." *(II Peter 3:15)* Christ undoubtedly predicted, and provided for, the inspiration of His apostles. He said the Holy Spirit would tell them what to say and would guide them into all truth. If it be objected that these sayings of Jesus predict inspiration for the apostles in their oral utterances only, it may be answered that if they were inspired of God when they spoke in court, or in prison, or in preaching to the people, surely they would have a like gift when they came to write the records which were to be the guide for Christians and for the Church in all succeeding generations.

The general claim of the Church has been that the original documents, that is, the autographs, were inspired of God so as to be free of error. No one claims that the many copies and translations have had no error in them. Therefore some will ask, What advantage is it to claim errorless inspiration for the autographs of the New Testament if you cannot claim the same for the present text? The answer is that there is great difference between a Bible which goes back to an errorless autograph, and one which has come down from an autograph which was itself imperfect and incorrect. There are in existence some 800,000 various readings, that is, readings which differ one from the other. But it has been said that of these, seven hundred and ninety-five thousand differ in matters about as important as

whether we shall spell honor with a "u" or without it, or how we shall pronounce *either*. There will always be a mystery about the combination of the Holy Spirit's influence and the natural faculties of the man who writes. All we can be sure of is, it was no mere mechanical dictation, such as would make the writers not even the penman, but the pen of the Holy Spirit. Peter and John both say that they testify of the things which they themselves have heard and seen. The Holy Spirit was working through their own impressions and their own recollections. Inspiration did not destroy the human element in the Bible. "Where the prophet has been of the priestly race, the temple, the altar, the ark, and the cherubim float before his view, as in the writings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The shepherd Amos still wanders in the pastures. His imagination still lingers with the flocks and dwells on the culture of his fields. His similitudes are taken from the mildew which blights the vineyard or the lion which invades the fold."

It will not do to say that some of the sayings of the Bible were inspired and others are not, for it would take nothing short of a revelation itself to enable man to distinguish between the inspired and the uninspired portions. When we say that the whole Bible is inspired, we are not saying that the whole Bible is a revelation. The Bible contains sayings which the Bible itself declares are contrary to sound morality and to God's revelation?[1] When we say that these parts of the Bible

1. See sayings by Job's friends which are distinctly disavowed and repudiated by God.

are inspired, what we mean is that they are recorded without an error. It is strange that even a fine mind like that of Coleridge should have rejected the doctrine of the complete inspiration of the Bible on the ground that there are many things said in the Book of Job which are contrary to true religion and morality. No one doubts that. But no sensible man claims that these sayings are a revelation, but that they are *recorded* by inspiration.

Perhaps the most striking witness to the inspiration of the Bible, as well as to its divine origin, is the well known fact that the Bible read and preached as the Word of God possesses great power. It is a sword piercing to the dividing asunder of joints and marrow. It is the fire that burns and consumes. It is the hammer which breaks the rock. But the Bible has never shown this power in the hands of those who could not say of it, "Thus saith the Lord." Even the most ardent advocates and exponents of naturalistic views of the Bible begin to be alarmed. One writes, "Liberal Protestants have lost their Bible, and in losing it they have lost their religion." And another, "Materialistic science and biblical criticism have brought multitudes to the brink of despair." Taught and preached as a merely human composition, or as a book half inspired and half uninspired, or as a book true in some things, but incorrect in other things, the Bible has not a feather's weight of influence. But where it is received as the Word of God, there, and there only, as Christ said, are the Scriptures "able to make us wise unto salvation." In all our dis-

cussions we must remember that to do that, to make men wise unto salvation, is the grand object of the Bible. The Bible was given to man in order that he might have eternal life through Jesus Christ. What St. John said at the close of his Gospel is true of every part of the Bible. "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name."

III.

THE BIBLE CONFIRMED BY THE RUINS AND MONUMENTS

A zealous believer in the Bible once asked a rich relative to contribute towards a fund for an archaeological exploration in Palestine. His cautious uncle wanted to know the real purpose of such an expedition. "To prove that the Bible is true," was the answer. "But," said his uncle, "suppose you prove the Bible is not true?" The reply of the man to this is not given. But if the interview had taken place within the last few years, the man might have answered that in view of the vast and ever increasing evidence from the remains of ancient cities, kingdoms and civilizations, there was no cause to fear that the spade of the archaeologist would prove the Bible to be false.

The Bible as the Word of God is our guide to truth and our way to Eternal Life. Its great purpose is not to teach us ancient history or modern science, but to tell us of God, of duty and of destiny. Nevertheless, it will strengthen our faith in the Bible as a divine guide if we find it to be true in what it has to say for instance, about Babylon, or Egypt, Sargon, Sennacherib, or Pilate. The books of the Old Testament, which cover a vast period of history and relate the history of the Hebrew people,

necessarily have frequent mention of other kingdoms and peoples. Were the Bible an untrustworthy book, nothing should be easier than to point out errors in chronology, geography, and biography. But the testimony which comes to us from the ruins which have been unearthed is of a nature to confirm our faith in the accuracy and credibility of the Bible.

It will now be our plan to select out of a multitude of cases just a few of the most striking ones where the records of the Scriptures are vindicated and confirmed by the discoveries of the archaeologist.

In the tenth chapter of the Book of Genesis, there is an account of the descendants of Noah and the countries which they founded and where they settled. Of one of the sons of Ham, Cush, it is recorded that his descendants settled in Babylon in the land of Shinar, and that thence there went out a colony which builded Nineveh, the great Assyrian capital. This was held to be an historical and ethnological blunder by the writer of Genesis. So great a scholar as Baron Bunsen held that there were no Cushites out of Africa, and that "an Asiatic Cush existed only in the imagination of Biblical interpreters and was a child of their despair." That both Babylon and Nineveh, distinctively Semitic civilizations, should have been founded by a Cushite people, was looked upon as a gross anachronism. But now the records of Babylon show that the Bible is correct. "An analysis of the earliest documents recovered from Babylon has shown that the primitive Babylonian people, that which raised the first structures whereof

any trace remains in the country, and whose buildings had gone to ruin in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, were Cushite, its vocabulary being undoubtedly Cushite or Ethiopian, and presenting numerous analogies with those of the non-Semitic races of modern Abyssinia. Hence, modern historical science in the person of one of its best representatives, M. Lenoramant, commences now the history of the East with, 'The first Cushite empire,' which it regards as dominant in Babylonia for several centuries before the earliest Semitic empire arose."[1]

In the fourteenth chapter of the Book of Genesis we have the interesting account of how a league of kings, under the general command of Chedorlaomer, King of Elam, made an invasion into the territory about the Dead Sea, where the four kings fought with five. The invading kings sacked Sodom and Gomorrah and carried away with them Lot, Abraham's nephew. When Abraham learned of the capture of his nephew, he pursued with three hundred and eighteen of his men, made a night attack on the camp of Chedorlaomer, rescued Lot, took back the spoils, and on his way home was met by Melchizedek, the King of Salem, who blessed him in the name of God. It is also recorded that Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek.

For a long time it was held that here was another blunder of the Bible; that the names of the kings were imaginary, and that the idea of a king of Babylon being subject to the king of Elam was absurd; and still more

1. George Rawlinson, *Modern Skepticism,* page 272.

so that Abraham's armed band of three hundred men would have dared to attack the army of the four confederate kings. There was no evidence to show that Elam had ever been an independent state, much less a powerful kingdom. "But the Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions have shown that throughout almost the whole of the Assyrian period Elam maintained herself as an independent state, and one of considerable military strength, on the southeastern borders of the empire. It has further been discovered that according to the Assyrian belief an Elamitic king was strong enough to invade and plunder Babylonia at a date which expressed in our ordinary manner would be B.C. 2286, or somewhat earlier than the time commonly assigned to Abraham."[1]

One of the kings mentioned as serving under Chedorlaomer, Amraphel, has been identified as the law-giver of Babylon, Hammurabi. The first part of Chedorlaomer's name is now known to have been used by the kings of Elam of that time. The code of Hammurabi tells us, too, that on such occasions as the victory of Abraham it was the custom to give tithes. As for the possibility of a small armed band making a nocturnal raid on a great host, this has been demonstrated over and over again in military history.

There was a time when men held that the account of Israel's captivity and residence in Egypt was altogether untrustworthy. But now the testimony from Egyptian writings and monuments is found to be in complete

1. George Rawlinson, *Modern Skepticism*, page 273.

harmony and accordance with the pictures of ancient Egypt and the Egyptians as drawn for us by Moses. In the first chapter of Exodus there is related the oppressive measures of the new king over Egypt which "knew not Joseph." This king, according to Exodus, compelled the Hebrews to build the treasure cities Pithom and Ramses. In those days the bricks of buildings were laid in straw. In order to make the task of the people more difficult, Pharaoh refused to let his taskmasters supply the people with the necessary straw. Compelled to go out and hunt for straw, they gathered stubble or roots instead of straw. The ruins of Pithom were uncovered in 1883 by Naville of the University of Geneva. On the great gateway was the inscription by Ramses the Great: "I built Pithom at the mouth of the East." In his book, *Moses and the Monuments,* Professor Kyle describes these ruins of Pithom as he saw them: "The bricks are laid in mortar, contrary to the usual Egyptian custom, and contrary to the observations of explorers in Egypt previous to the time of Naville's discovery at Pithom. The lower courses in at least some of the store chamber work are laid with brick filled with good chock straw; the upper courses are made of brick having in them no binding material whatever, and the middle courses are made of brick filled with stubble pulled up by the roots. The impress of the roots is as plainly marked in the brick as though cut by an engraver's tools." Thus the ruins of Pithom not only confirm the record of Exodus that such a treasure city was built, but confirm the story of the bricks, the straw and the stubble.

The Old Testament represents the kingdom of David and Solomon as one of great power and considerable territorial extent. This was held to be out of keeping with the facts of history, for, it was asked, how could the Hebrew monarchy come to such power and dominion and take such a great place among the great ones of the earth, when the country of Palestine was placed midway between the territories of two great and powerful monarchies, Egypt and Assyria? Here again the ancient tablets and inscriptions have confirmed the record of the Bible. "The monumental evidence of the two countries shows that exactly at the time when the conquest of David and the empire of Solomon are placed, both Egypt and Assyria were exceptionally weak. Egypt, after the time of Ramses III. (B.C. 1200) ceased to be aggressive on the side of Syria, and continued until the accession of Sheshonk, or Shishak, (B.C. 990) to be a quiet and unwarlike power. Assyria, which, about B.C. 1100, extended her sway into the valley of the Orontes, and threatened Palestine with subjection, passed under a cloud soon afterwards and did not again become a terror to Syria until about B.C. 880. For a Jewish empire to arise it was necessary that Egypt and Assyria should be simultaneously weak. Such simultaneous weakness is found for the hundred or hundred and twenty years between B.C. 1100 and B.C. 990. And exactly into this interval fall the rise of the Jews to power under Saul and David and the establishment of their empire under Solomon."[1]

1. George Rawlinson, *Modern Skepticism*, page 283.

In the fourteenth chapter of the first book of the Kings it is related that Shishak, king of Egypt, came with his army and took Jerusalem, stripping the city of all its treasures, especially the shields of gold which hung in the king's house and which had been one of the notable splendors of Solomon's reign. This expedition was questioned, if not denied, for many years. But today, on the wall of the Temple of Karnak, the Egyptologists can read the inscription of Shishak in which he tells of his successful invasion of Jerusalem.

In the twentieth chapter of the Book of Isaiah it is stated that Tartan, who had been sent by Sargon, the king of Assyria, fought against Ashdod and took it. This is the sole mention of Sargon in the Bible, nor is he mentioned by any of the classical writers, who speak of Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, and Esarhaddon. Here again it was held the Bible was in error, and the very existence of such a man was doubted. But "the Assyrian inscriptions have completely cleared up all this obscurity. Sargon was found to be the successor of Shalmaneser, the predecessor and father of Sennacherib. He speaks of having captured Ashdod. All that Isaiah says of him is confirmed."[1]

Every school boy has probably learned by heart some of the stanzas of Lord Byron's stirring poem on the destruction of Sennacherib's army, how

"The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold,"

1. George Rawlinson, *Modern Skepticism,* page 287.

and how

"Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown."

The account of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah and his siege of Jerusalem and the calamity which overtook his army when 185,000 of them perished, is related in the second Book of the Kings, the 18th and 19th chapters, and in the prophecy of Isaiah, chapters 36 and 37. From this record it would seem that Sennacherib made two attacks upon Jerusalem, the first of which was altogether successful. II Kings XVIII tells us that he took all the cities of Judah and exacted tribute from Hezekiah to the amount of three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. It is also stated that Hezekiah gave him all the silver in the house of the Lord and in the king's treasury, and even stripped the gold from the pillars and doors of the temple. The inscriptions of Sennacherib are in remarkable agreement with what we are told by the Old Testament. In his account of his campaign Sennacherib says: "And because Hezekiah, king of Judah, would not submit to my yoke, I came up against him, and by force of arms and by the might of my power I took *forty-six of his strong-fenced cities:* and of the smaller towns which were scattered about, I took and plundered a countless number. And from these places I captured and carried off as spoil

200,350 people, old and young, male and female, together with horses and mares, asses and camels, oxen and sheep, a countless multitude. And Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jerusalem, his capital city, like a bird in a cage, building towers round the city to hem him in, and raising banks of earth against the gates, so as to prevent escape. . . . Then upon this Hezekiah there fell the fear of the power of my arms, and he sent out to me the chiefs and the elders of Jerusalem with thirty talents of gold and eight hundred talents of silver, and divers treasures, a rich and immense booty . . . All these things were brought to me at Nineveh, the seat of my government, Hezekiah having sent them by way of tribute, and as a token of his submission to my power."

The only discrepancy is in the amount of silver which Sennacherib received. Perhaps he estimated by a lighter standard, or it may be that the gold taken from the temple in the king's house by Hezekiah made up the difference. As for the second attempt on Jerusalem, Sennacherib is careful not to state that he took the city. In secular history, Herodotus and Josephus, there is reference to the invasion of Sennacherib and his overwhelming defeat with the loss of a great host.

A remarkable testimony to the credibility of the Bible is found in its use of names. A careful survey of these names shows that the names of forty-one of the kings mentioned from the time of Abraham down to the end of the Old Testament period are also found in documents and inscriptions of the period of these kings. The consonants in the names of these kings, one hun-

dred and sixty one, are, with two or three exceptions, so exactly transliterated in the Hebrew that there can be no question as to the identity. This accuracy contrasts strangely with a list made in Greek by an Egyptian priest of one hundred and forty kings in Egypt. Of these, fifty-four names have no syllables which can be recognized in any of the names of the Egyptian kings mentioned in the monuments. A Greek historian, Africanus, in a history of the Assyrians, gives the names of forty-one kings of Assyria. In comparing this list with the monuments, it is possible to recognize the name of one king only.

In his account of the birth of Jesus, Luke 2:1-3, Luke says: "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city." This narrative of Luke was declared to be in error in two respects. First, that he represents people going up to their native towns to be enrolled in the census; and second, that he represents this census as taken when Quirinius, or Cyrenius, was governor of Syria. Cyrenius was governor of Syria in 6 A.D., and it was held that Luke was wrong in his chronology by at least ten years.

A fragmentary inscription at Rome is thought by some scholars to prove that Quirinius was governor of Syria twice. The name Quirinius however, in this inscription is lacking. But in 1912, in Antioch, in southern Galatia, Sir William Ramsay discovered an inscrip-

tion which refers to Quirinius as having been elected to the office of duumvir, and this, Ramsay held, proves that he had been sent to Syria as governor during the period of the Hamonadian war, 10 to 7 B.C. If so, this would confirm Luke 2:2, that the census taken at the time Jesus was born was the first enrollment when Quirinius was governor of Syria.[1]

As for the rejection of the narrative on the ground that the method of taking a census by having people go up to their native towns to be enrolled was impracticable and preposterous, that has been altogether removed by the papyri discovered in Egypt. In a town in Egypt, Oxyrhynchus, south of Lake Fayum, there were discovered not long ago great quantities of papyri. They came out of the rubbish heaps which are characteristic of Oriental towns. In the providence of God, the sand of the desert buried and preserved these papers through the centuries as perfectly as if they had been deposited in the steel safe of a modern trust company. These important discoveries were made in 1897. In his *Archaeology and the Bible,* Professor George A. Barton gives a translation of a papyrus scrap dated in the time of the Emperor Trajan, 103-4 A.D. In this letter the writer says: "Because of the approaching census it is necessary that all those residing for any cause away from their own homes should at once prepare to return to their own government, in order that they may complete the family administration of the enrollment."

From this and other letters, it is clear that the enroll-

1. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible,* p. 436.

ment of each district was intended to include all the kinsmen belonging to that district, and that "lest those residing elsewhere should forget to return home for the census, proclamations were issued directing them to do so. It is well known that in many respects the customs of administration in Syria and Egypt were similar. Luke's statement that Joseph went up from Nazareth to Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to enroll himself with Mary (Luke 2:4, 5), turns out to be in exact accord with the governmental regulations as we now know them from the papyri."[1]

The Hittites. The Hittites are one of the most frequently mentioned peoples of the Old Testament. Abraham purchased the Cave of Machpelah from the Hittites, and Esau married Hittite wives. In the great battle at the Waters of Merom, where Joshua defeated the confederated kings of Northern Canaan and their allies, the Hittites fought on the side of Jabin, king of Hazor, and the other kings against Joshua. Of all the earlier inhabitants of Palestine, the Hittites alone are mentioned as having existed in power and strength after the conquest of the land by the Jews. Uriah the Hittite was an important officer in the army of David. It was his wife that David seduced in his shameful sin and crime when he had the brave Uriah treacherously slain in the forefront of the hottest battle. Solomon in the days of his apostasy had Hittite wives or concubines. In the account of the

1. George A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible.*

splendor and power of Solomon's kingdom we read that the kings of the Hittites purchased their horses and chariots through Solomon's merchants: "And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty: and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means." *(I Kings 10:29.)*

So strong was the Hittite nation and so great was the dread of their armies, that when the Syrians who were beseiging Samaria heard the rumor that the king of Israel had hired the Hittites to fight on the side of Israel, they deserted their camps and fled in terror. We have the dramatic story of this event in Second Kings, Chapter Seven. When the four lepers, in despair of their lives, wandered out from the walls of Samaria, saying to themselves that at all events death awaited them whether they stayed in Samaria or went out to the camp of the enemies, they found the camp of the Syrians deserted. "And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there. For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the King of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled

for their life." *(II Kings 7:5-7.)*

Until the last century, nothing was known of the Hittites outside of these Biblical references. Because of this apparent lack of mention of the Hittites in extra-Biblical records it was said that no such people ever existed. Here, we were told, was another instance of the inaccuracy of the Bible, and another reason why "no one nowadays ascribes a great historical importance to the Hebrew records".[1] But in the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century Professor A. H. Sayce of Oxford, the celebrated archaeologist, advanced the view that the people frequently mentioned in the inscriptions of the Egyptian kings as the "Kheta", and in the inscriptions of the Assyrian kings as the "Khatti", were the Hittites of the Bible, and that the carvings and inscriptions and huge sculptures found on the mountain sides of Asia Minor and Syria all refer to these same Hittites. This is now the accepted view of the archaeologists, and for many years one of their chief tasks has been the deciphering of the Hittite inscriptions. The result of these studies and investigations is that the Hittites are discovered to have been a great and powerful nation, stretching across Asia Minor from the Aegean Sea clear down to Carchemish on the Euphrates and to Kadesh on the Orontes. For centuries they carried on a duel for empire, first with the Egyptians, and then with the Syrians. Ramses II, or Ramses the Great, fought against the Hittites in a great battle at Kadesh on the Orontes. An account of that battle which is still extant describes

1. See Hittites, Historians' *History of the World,* page 391.

the exploits of Ramses as he fought single handed against the Hittites. On a stele on a southern wall of the hypostyle of Karnak, there is preserved the terms of the treaty of peace between Egypt and the Hittites.

The next duel for empire was between the Hittites and the Assyrians. On a stone tablet of Adad-nirari I. (1340 B. C.) there is an account of a war with two tribes of Northern Syria. In the annals of Tiglath-pilezer I, (1100 B.C.) Tiglathpilezer boasts how he conquered "the people of the land of Khatti, the insubordinate who in the pride of their strength had taken towns of the land of Shubartu which were subject to my lord Asshur; they heard of my march against Shubartu, the splendor of my strength overthrew them; they avoided a battle and embraced my feet." In 1717 B.C., the Western capital of the Hittites, Carchemish, fell before the Assyrian king, Sargon II.[1] The fall of Carchemish is referred to in Isaiah, where we read of the boast of an Assyrian King, "Are not my princes all of them kings? Is not Calno as Carchemish?" *(Isaiah 10:8-9 A.R.V.)*

The numerous Hittite carvings and inscriptions represent them in characteristic dress, wearing a shoe with upturned toe and a high conical cap. "In brief," as one historian of the Hittites writes, "those Hittites whom we had hitherto looked upon as more or less dim figures have suddenly revealed themselves to us in a new character, and it is almost impossible to say in what depart-

1. It was at this same Carchemish that Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C. defeated Pharoah-Necho, king of Egypt (2 Chron. 35:20).

ment of the science of antiquity they will not prove of preeminent importance."[1]

Any confirmation by extra-Biblical records of the statements and records of the Bible is significant, but all the more so when it is a confirmation of statements that had been regarded by hostile critics as unworthy of credence. The most striking instance of this is the confirmation by the ancient ruins, sculptures and inscriptions of what the Bible tells us about the Hittites. "The lack of extra-Biblical testimony to their existence led some scholars about a century ago to deny their historicity. They scoffed at the idea of Israel allying herself with such an unhistorical people as the Hittites as narrated in 2 Kings 7:6. But those objections have vanished into thin air. The Hittites were as real a people and a power as any that reigned in Asia."[2]

Thus do the ancient inscriptions of Egypt and Assyria and the huge sculptures on the rocks of Asia Minor confirm the truth of the Old Testament with respect to the Hittites. "Even more frequent and more fatal than historical hair-splitting," writes Prof. Sayce, has been the habit of arguing from the ignorance of the critic himself. Time after time statements have been assumed to be untrue because we cannot bring forward other evidence in support of the facts which they record. The critic has made his own ignorance the measure of the credibility of an ancient document. . . . The mention of 'the kings of the Hittites' in the account of the siege

1. See Hittites, Historians' *History of the World,* Vol. II, page 396.
2. Price, Prof. of Semitic Languages and Literature in the University of Chicago, *The Monuments and the Old Testament.*

of Samaria by the Syrians (II Kings 7:6) was declared to be an error or an invention; but it was only the ignorance of the critic himself that was at fault."[1]

A little more than half a century ago scholars scoffed at the Biblical accounts of such a people as the Hittites. Today their records on the mountainsides are a chief occupation of the archaeologists. In the Encyclopedia Britannica, Julius Caesar gets five pages, Abraham Lincoln six, Cromwell six and a half, and the Hittites, about whom, outside of the Bible, nothing was known as late as 1876, get ten pages.[2]

1. "The Higher Criticism and the Monuments," from *The New Biblical Guide*, Vol. V, Rev. John Urquhart.

2. One of the most famous of the Hittite inscriptions is the colossal carving on Mount Sipylus, at Manisa in Turkey, the ancient Magnesia. This is one of the most spoken of and described monuments, both in ancient and modern times. In the summer of 1937, on my way from Thyatira to Smyrna, I stopped at Manisa and went out to view this celebrated sculpture. It is in a precipitous mountain cliff. The ancient writer Pausanias tells of a visit to this monument and how it was frequently confused with a natural rock on the same mountain which was associated with the myth of Niobe and her sorrows. After a difficult climb up the mountain side, I was able to get a fairly good view of this gigantic sculpture. It represents a seated female and the female bust is easily recognized. The hieroglyphs in the recess near the head prove its Hittite origin.

IV.

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS

Some years ago there appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* a series of articles, "Lincoln the Lover." The ease with which anachronisms were discovered in the letters alleged to have been written by Lincoln and Ann Rutledge and their friends, set one to thinking about literary forgeries and the great difficulty of successfully foisting on the public what is not genuine. Benjamin Franklin was so versed in the noble narrative style of the Old Testament, that when he was in England he was able repeatedly to perpetrate his famous joke, The Parable of Toleration. This was the story of how Abraham once drove a traveller away from his tent because the man commenced to eat without giving thanks to God. After the traveller had departed, God came to visit Abraham and asked him why he could not have tolerated the idol worshipper for a single night when God had tolerated him for 987 years. Franklin would pretend to read this parable as the last chapter of the Book of Genesis. But when it comes to the publication of an alleged historical incident, or letters by historical characters, the difficulties are practically insurmountable. Let us now turn to the Four Gospels and see how

they have been able to maintain a reputation for genuineness and credibility despite the microscopic investigation of centuries of hostile criticism.

In the Book of Genesis, we read that "a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted and became four heads." Christian devotion very early saw in those four rivers a symbol of the Four Gospels. As the four rivers flowed out of Eden to water the whole earth, so the Four Gospels are rivers of salvation, going out from the throne of God to refresh the earth with the good tidings of redemption. This idea has been beautifully expressed by Adam St. Victor, the Latin poet of the 12th century, where he sings, —

"These four streams, through Eden flowing,
Moisture, verdure, still bestowing,
Make the flowers and fruit there growing
In rich plenty laugh and sing.
Christ the Source, these streams forth-sending;
High the source, these downward trending;
That they thus a taste transcending
Of life's fount to saints may bring."

In discussing the witness of the Four Gospels, there are two questions which we must face and answer. First, Are they genuine? Second, Are they credible? Were they written by the men whose names they bear? Are they accurate and reliable in their statements? In such a discussion the question of inspiration can be waived for the time being, and we approach these books

and their claims just as we would a book that purported to give us the history of Napoleon and the Napoleonic wars, or the history of Luther and the Reformation.

1. *Are They Genuine?* Today, throughout Christendom, we find the Four Gospels received by the whole Church as a true history of the commencement of Christianity, and attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. We go back five centuries and we find the same thing to be true. Ten centuries back and the same thing is universally true. Fifteen centuries back and the Christian Church receives just Four Gospels, and the Four are regarded as the works of the men whose names they bear, and as having authority because of their early and apostolic origin. Leaving aside for the moment the critical theories as to the exact dates for the appearance of the Four Gospels, it is a thing of mighty significance and inestimable assurance for our faith, to learn that by the close of the second century the Four Gospels were "the sole and universally recognized authorities concerning the life of Jesus, in all the Churches in the different regions of the Roman Empire." There are many witnesses about the close of the second century which might be quoted as showing the general acceptance of the Four Gospels, but I shall give only that of Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, who, about the year A.D. 180, wrote against the heresies which had sprung up in his day. In this work he speaks of the Four Gospels as received by all the churches, and exclusively so. He tells us also that Matthew published a written gospel among the Hebrews in their own language; that Mark, Peter's

disciple, "did himself also publish unto us in writing the things which were preached by Peter;" that "Luke, too, the attendant of Paul, set down in a book the Gospel preached by him;" that "afterwards John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned on his breast — he again put forth his Gospel while he abode in Ephesus in Asia."

How near this brings us to the age of the apostles we shall realize when we hear Irenaeus give this beautiful testimony concerning his friend and teacher, Polycarp, who in turn had heard John teach and preach: "I can recall the very place where Polycarp used to sit and teach, his manner of speech, his mode of life, his appearance, the style of his address, his frequent references to St. John and to others who had seen the Lord; how he used to repeat from memory the discourses which he had heard from them concerning our Lord, His miracles, and His mode of teaching; and how, being instructed himself by those who were eye-witnesses of the Life of the world, there was in all that he said a strict agreement with the Scriptures."

Being thus a disciple of Polycarp, who in turn knew St. John, it is incredible that Irenaeus should be preserving an unreliable tradition when he says that John wrote the Fourth Gospel. The way in which men at the close of the second century refer to the Gospels and their authors, makes it impossible to think that such a belief was any *new* thing. The references carry with them the implication that such has *long* been the belief of all the churches. When enemies of Christianity, like

Clesus and Porphyry, wish to attack the Church, it is the statements found in the Four Gospels which they attack. A swarm of apocryphal gospels arose very early with the most fantastic and absurd and grotesque accounts of the doings and the sayings of Jesus, yet these were not received by the churches as trustworthy. Why? Not merely because of the vast difference in sobriety and moral elevation, but because the Churches believed that the Four Gospels came from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, who knew whereof they testified, whereas the others were written by men who were drawing upon their imagination and were not acquainted with the facts of the life of Jesus.

Another remarkable thing about the Four Gospels is the great number of references to them soon after their first appearance, whatever date be fixed for that. The great classics of antiquity are rarely cited, or their authors named in literature, within a hundred years of their appearance. Herodotus, for example, is only quoted once by Aristotle, during the century following the publication of his history, and then for five hundred years goes without mention. In striking contrast with this, the Four Gospels were from the beginning of their history appealed to by Christian men as authorities upon Christian life and doctrine, so much so, that were all the manuscripts and versions of the Four Gospels destroyed, they could be restored by collecting together the quotations from and the allusions to them during the first two or three centuries.

A very significant thing about the first three Gospels

is their record of the prophecies of Jesus about the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, or His coming again. To this day the honest scholar is perplexed by these passages. The difficulty lies in the fact that the two events are placed in such close juxtaposition that it is hard, and sometimes impossible, to know whether Christ is referring to the destruction of Jerusalem or the Second Advent. But suppose now that the Gospels, even if written by the supposed authors, belong to a period *after* the destruction of Jerusalem. Knowing, as they then must have known, the separation of the two events, would they have presented them in the close and almost indistinguishable relationship in which they do present them to us in the Gospels? In this connection, it is important to note that the one Gospel which was by common consent written *after* the destruction of Jerusalem, that of St. John, contains no prediction of the fall of the city.

We must not imagine that all wisdom belongs to our age, and that in the first or second century it was possible to pass off as sober history what was fiction, and still more that it could be passed off as the testimony of eye witnesses. The fact is, there were insurmountable difficulties in the way of imposters passing off the Four Gospels as being from eye witnesses and having them so accepted by the Christian communities who were so close to the events and the chief actors in the events. I might conceive of a man "faking" a find of some Gospels today, and now, after nineteen hundred years, passing them off as the writings of the apostles.

But I cannot conceive of such a thing being done even as late as the age of Irenaeus, when there were men alive who had talked with the apostles themselves. They who reject the genuineness of the Four Gospels must then account for the fact that at a very early period the Gospels were in circulation, and were regarded as authoritative because they came from Matthew and Mark and Luke and John. It is one thing to make easy and light denials of the genuineness of the Gospels, but a far different thing to give an account of their circulation and authority and alleged authorship, save on the ground that they belong to the apostolic age and were written by the men to whom the successive generations of Christians have attributed them.

2. *The Credibility of the Gospels.* Granted that the Gospels come from Matthew and Mark and Luke and John, did these men tell the truth? Have we reason to believe that their memories of Christ are credible? The Swiss theologian, Godet, commences his Studies in the New Testament with these words: "Of all the important events which took place in the world before the advent of Jesus Christ, there is not one which has been recorded in four narratives, much less in four narratives nearly contemporaneous with the event and simultaneous with each other. The appearance of Jesus on earth has been alone the object of this signal distinction. Before the end of the century in which Jesus Christ was born, four original histories of His life and works were in circulation among the Churches, and in the world." This is a remarkable and distinctive thing

about Christ and the origin of Christianity.

We have seen then how the Gospels arose very early and how they must have come from the men to whose authorship they have been attributed. But did these men tell the truth? Can we trust their narratives of the life of Christ?

In answering such a question the first thing to consider is the qualifications of these men to bear witness. Did they know whereof they spake? Were they in a position to get the true history? Matthew and John were disciples of Jesus, and, of course, had every best advantage to testify about Jesus and His ministry and death and resurrection. Mark was at least a friend of the disciples, and, probably, the special intimate of Peter. In early times his Gospel was even referred to as "Peter's Gospel." Luke was the friend and companion of Paul on his travels, and had every opportunity to learn from the first disciples the facts of Christ's life. It is clearly the purpose of each of the four writers to give a true account of things that Jesus said and did. Luke is very careful to state his purpose and his qualifications for writing his history. He says, "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye witnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me, also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those

things, wherein thou hast been instructed." St. John is equally as explicit as to his purpose and his qualifications to bear witness. He says, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his name." (John 20:31.) "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things: and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true. In the beginning of his first letter John writes, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life. . . . That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us." (I John 1:1-3.)

The authors of the Gospels then tell us, directly or indirectly, that they are qualified to bear witness and that their purpose is to tell about Christ what is true, that men who already are Christians may be confirmed in their faith, and that those who are not Christians may come to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and through Him have life. Were they sincere in this declaration of their purpose? If so, did they succeed in carrying out their purpose?

An impartial reading of the Gospels must leave the following impressions:

(a) The writers are drawing upon a very rich source of knowledge concerning Christ and His life. The question of the order of the Gospels chronologically and their mutual interrelationship, dependence

or independence, need not concern us here. The perfectly obvious thing is that they are drawing upon a rich mine of material, and original knowledge. St. John tells us this very definitely where he says, "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that could be written." (John 21:25).

(b) The calm, sober, sagacious, common sense, and rugged honesty which speak in the narratives. A comparison of the Four Gospels with the Apocryphal Gospels which arose very early in the Church shows at once how wide is the gulf which yawns between the ordinary writings about Christ and these Gospels of the New Testament. The manner and content of the Four Gospels, in contrast with that of the Apocryphal Gospels, is a striking witness to their credibility. The Gospels relate the most extraordinary events, stupendous miracles, but always with a chaste restraint and calm dignity which gives one the impression that they are relating only what they heard and saw, and not what was invented by themselves, or imagined by others. They tell of the cruel death of Jesus on the Cross, but without a word of censure for those who put Him to death.

(c) The candor with which they relate things discreditable to themselves, such as their rivalries and contentions and worldly ambitions, their gross misunderstanding of Jesus, the denial of Peter, and how they all forsook Him in His hour of need.

(d) Their reliability in their testimony as to other matters than Christ and His teaching. They were not writing histories, nor even biographies, but rather memories of Christ. But in so doing they were faithful historians. This is to be observed especially in Luke's Gospel. Luke writes of a period of history when the political and governmental divisions and organizations were most intricate and complex. Yet in no case is he found untrustworthy as an historian. Take, for example, the opening verses of his third chapter: "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea, and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness." Here, in a few lines, Luke mentions five civil rulers and two ecclesiastical rulers and five political divisions. In such details as these Luke is always found reliable, and his reliability in these lesser matters makes him credible in the greater matters of the facts of the life of Christ. Because the Bible is found faithful in these lesser things, we believe it in the greater matters.

(e) The particularity of what they narrate. Nowhere do the authors betray any caution in their narratives lest they be apprehended in falsehood or misrepresentation. Frankly and fully, they give names, dates, places and incidents and circumstances. If blind men were not healed at Jericho, and if Christ did not

call Lazarus out of the grave at Bethany, the lie would have been quickly discovered and the forgers exposed. It is impossible to think that the story of Lazarus as told by John, with its wealth of circumstantial detail, what Jesus said, what the sisters said, what the Jews said, and what the rulers said after the miracle, — that such a tale as this, if only a tale, could have gained currency through the Gospels, for men living at Bethany could have proved it false. But this was never done. The story was never challenged.

(f) Their Modesty. So far as the Gospels themselves are concerned, it is only by inference that we can discover the names of the authors of two of them, Luke and John. John disguises himself under his title, "That other disciple." The Christian community must have had good reason for attributing the Gospels to their several authors, for the Gospels themselves never exalt or bring their authors to the front. The one personality whom they exalt and magnify, and the only one, is Jesus Christ. The biographers sink their own personality completely in their history of Christ.

(g) "Their circumstantial variety and their substantial truth." That phrase of Paley puts the case well. We find in the Gospels a *circumstantial variety* in their records of the same event, but a *substantial agreement* and truth as to the chief matter to which they are bearing witness. The resurrection of Christ is a case in point. Take the story of the angels at the sepulchre; Matthew and Mark mention one. Luke says there were two. The accounts are not irreconcilable. Matthew re-

lated the appearance of the angel in connection with the rolling away of the stone. It was enough for his purpose to mention one. Mark mentions the angel who addressed the women. His silence with regard to the presence of another does not contradict Luke's account. We cannot bring the charge of contradiction against the evangelists in these and similar instances, unless we adopt the rule that truthfulness in the report of the same occurrence by different persons is inconsistent with circumstantial variation. With circumstantial variety the evangelists all bear witness to the substantial and important truth that Christ was risen from the dead.

(h) The moral grandeur and influence of the contents of the Gospels. We must be careful not to argue that the books are true because they are inspired, and then say they are inspired because of their contents. Nevertheless, there is a moral beauty and power in the Gospels which have commended them to successive generations and which make the explanation of divine inspiration granted to their authors not only understandable, but necessary. Who but Christ could have uttered the sublime sentiments of the great prayer of St. John 17? Is it conceivable that John, or anyone else, could have invented such a prayer? Or take the accounts of the betrayal and passion and trial and death of Christ. Each one of them bears all the marks of truth and sincerity. They have a ring to them that a work of imagination would not have, and still less a forgery. The simple and yet profound pathos of Gethsemane and Calvary has touched with cleansing power

the hearts of untold thousands of the followers of Jesus.

(i) The alternative. If the Gospels are not true, then there are just two positions which we can take with regard to them: First, the apostles wrote the Gospels, and put down their records sincerely, but they were wrong and deceived as to the facts. They thought, or imagined, that Jesus worked miracles and rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, but they were mistaken and deluded by their own enthusiasm. This would mean, in plain words, that the disciples were fools and simpletons. But as they appear in the pages of the Gospels they do not impress us as fools, but as men of strong intelligence and sagacity. Second, the Gospels were not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, but by forgers and impostors who told these extraordinary and false tales and sought to gain credence for them by palming them off as the production of the apostles. But why would men invent lies to explain the origin of what had never arisen, if the New Testament facts are false? And, even if we could conceive of a possible motive, how could knaves and impostors invent the sublime narratives of the Gospels, such a passage as the fifteenth chapter of Luke, or the twenty-first chapter of John, giving the immortal scene by the sea of Galilee when Jesus won Peter back to his discipleship? Could liars and impostors have written such pages? Still more, could such men have produced the tremendous and glorious Personality of Christ as we behold Him in the pages of the Four Gospels? If so, that would indeed be a miracle more overwhelming

than any which confronts us on the sacred page. The sun standing still in the heavens would be a small thing in comparison. This has been well stated by Roussseau, a man who appreciated the sublimity of the Gospels and their morality, too, even if he made little effort to follow their precepts: "I will confess to you that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the Gospel has its influence on my heart. Peruse the words of our philosophers, with all their pomp of diction: how mean, how contemptible are they, compared with the Scriptures! Is it possible that a book, at once so simple and sublime, should be merely the work of man? . . . Shall we suppose the evangelic history a mere fiction? Indeed, my friend, it bears not the marks of fiction; on the contrary, the history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. Such a supposition, in fact, only shifts the difficulty, without obviating it; it is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, than that one only should furnish the subject of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction and strangers to the morality contained in the Gospels, the marks of whose truths are so striking and inimitable that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero."[1]

This same idea has been well put by John Stuart Mill in his essay on Theism, and he certainly was one who had no bias toward evangelical Christianity: "But who among his disciples or their proselytes were capable of

1. Rousseau, *Vicar of Savoy.*

inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or imagining the life and character revealed in the gospel? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee, and certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncrasies were of entirely a different sort: still less, the early Christian writers, in whom nothing was more evident than that the good which was in them was all derived, as they always confessed, from a higher source."

Whether we listen to the unbroken and united testimony of the successive generations of Christians from the present day back to the apostolic age itself, or whether we contemplate the Four Gospels and read their contents, the conclusion is that they testify of Christ the things which are true. The unbelief of every age has tried to discredit the New Testament, but only to fail, as the waves of the ocean are flung back from some rugged promontory. What argument and reason and research could not accomplish, hate and violence and persecution have not been able to do. The sneers of Celsus, the fires of Torquemada and the hypotheses of unbelief have all failed. The Book cannot be destroyed. Like the bush in the desert, it burns, yet unconsumed. Hammer after hammer has been lifted against it, but the anvil abides, while the hammers of unbelief and persecution lie broken at its base.

V.

THE GOSPELS AND THE MIRACLES

Traveling once in a train from Moscow to Warsaw, I fell into conversation with two Americans, one an editor of the Boston Transcript, the other a young physician from the state of Washington. The physician happened to refer to an act passed by the legislature of Washington. To me and my companion, it seemed an altogether unlikely, and even inconceivable thing that any legislature should pass such an act, and we insisted that he must be mistaken. When we returned to America, we found that the physician was correct and that the legislature had passed such an act. The fact that I thought that the act was inconceivable, that it could not have been enacted by any legislature, had nothing to do with the real record of the case. It was a matter of evidence, not of pre-conceived opinion as to whether the thing was possible or not.

So it is in regard to what we call miracles. Whether we believe with David Hume that no miracle has happened, or can happen, or whether we would like to say with Tertullian that there are not difficulties enough for our faith to vanquish and conquer, that has nothing to do with the fact of miracles. It is a question of

record and evidence. There is no doubt that the Scriptures plainly and repeatedly declare that miracles happened. All sorts of miracles are related in the Bible, events which are clearly beyond the working of the common, observable laws of nature and of man. When we come to face the problem of these miracles, we must remember it is not a question of prejudice against miracles, or prejudice for them, but a matter of record. When the Zulu chief was told by his men who had returned from England that they had come in an iron ship, he said they were liars; the thing was impossible. But the fact was that they had crossed the ocean in that kind of a ship. It was a matter, not of opinion, but of evidence.

I do not propose to spend any time attempting to define a miracle. We all know what a miracle is, whether we can define it or not, and when we read that Christ walked on the sea, that He fed five thousand with a few loaves and fishes, that He commanded the winds and the waves to obey Him, that He straightened withered arms and cleansed the leper's flesh—we know that we are dealing with a miracle. Therefore, instead of defining a miracle, I select as a guide for our discussion the greatest miracle which is recorded in the Gospels, the miracle of the raising of Lazarus. It is in every way a representative miracle and a test miracle. It is recorded with unusual fullness. It presents Jesus Christ in all the tenderness of His compassion and in all the power of His Deity. It was done, not merely to heal broken hearts, but to answer a direct challenge

of unbelievers, to convert men from unbelief to belief. It had that effect. The prayer of Christ that the raising of Lazarus might make men believe on Him was answered. Men did believe on Him because they saw Lazarus come out of his grave.

1. *Miracles are possible.* When we talk about what can or cannot happen, we are always keeping within the necessary limits of our own observation. It is a blessing that the laws of nature are what we call uniform. It would be awkward if the law of gravitation were suddenly suspended, or if the laws of heat and cold were suddenly confused. The uniformity of nature is a blessing. But to say that is the only garment which God can wear, that He can work in no other way than through secondary causes, is to make God a very limited God; yea, worse than that, it is to make God simply another name for the law and energies of nature. God would be like a man who made a machine and set it going, but never again could intervene to regulate it, and stop it, or change it. When we say that a miracle has taken place, we do not mean that there has been an effect without a cause, but, on the contrary, that an effect has been produced by the mightiest of all causes, the immediate activity and will of God. Paul was talking common sense when he said to Agrippa, "Why should it be thought an incredible thing with thee that God should raise the dead?" Why should God, who created man out of nothing, not be able to raise the dead? Which would be the greater miracle, creation or re-creation? If God could create man, He could re-

create him. When you face this question of miracles, it all depends upon what kind of a God you believe in, and whether or not you spell His name with a capital G.

"Admit a God, that mystery supreme,
That cause uncaused, all other wonders cease;
Nothing is marvelous for Him to do.
Deny Him, all is mystery besides."[1]

2. *Miracles are desirable and probable.* We have seen that God *could* work a miracle. The question now is, *Would* He work a miracle? If God created man in His image, revelation and communication with man would be the natural course for God to follow. Especially would this be so, if man sinned and fell and thereby lost his communion with God. If man was to be delivered out of this condition, if he was to learn again the will of God, which, by his sin, he had lost, then he had to have a revelation from God. But since he had lost his communion with God, how was man to know that God was speaking with him? This brings us to the propriety and the desirability of a miracle. When Moses saw the bush burning in the desert, and not consumed, he turned aside to see this great sight. The most natural thing in the world for any man to do! It is not the ordinary, the commonplace, the routine, which attracts our attention, but the extraordinary and the unusual, for it certifies to the fact that the messenger who is speaking has come from

1. Young, *Night Thoughts*, "Night VI".

God, and that the message which he delivers is true. God's messengers and prophets in the Old Testament were accompanied by the power to work miracles. In the New Testament, Christ and His apostles declared the truth to the accompaniment of many miracles. In this particular miracle which we have before us, the raising of Lazarus, Christ explicitly declares that it is done as a sign, so that those who see it done shall believe that he is the Messiah, the one who was sent by God.

Jesus Christ came with extraordinary claims, both as to his person and as to his works. He claimed to be the Son of God who existed before the foundations of the world, and he said that he had come to destroy the power of evil in the world, to overthrow the Kingdom of Satan and establish the Kingdom of Righteousness. These were extraordinary claims; but they were accompanied by extraordinary demonstrations of power and might, and the working of these mighty signs and wonders and divers miracles at once made men ask questions as to the person and rank of Christ. For instance, when He stood up in the boat and commanded the winds and the waves to be still, his disciples feared exceedingly and said, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and sea obey him?"

3. *Miracles are Credible.* They took place. God who could work miracles, and who would work them for the good of mankind, did work them. Here, it is a question of evidence and nothing else. David Hume's attitude toward miracles was the following: "When,"

he says, "anyone tells me that he saw a dead man restored to life, I immediately consider with myself whether it is more probable that this person should either deceive or be deceived, or that the facts which he relates, should have happened." He concludes that no matter what the testimony, it will always be more likely that the witness is deceived, or a deceiver, than that the miracle took place. He is right in the position he takes that a miracle must have extraordinary testimony. We believe that the miracles of the New Testament have such extraordinary testimony. We would not believe them upon ordinary evidence. Let us look now into this evidence and see what there is in it which would lead us to believe that the miracles actually took place.

(a) The character of the witnesses. A good witness must be a contemporary, and he must have been in a position to know the facts of the case. We claim that the writers of the four Gospels are so qualified. Two of them, Matthew, and John who relates this particular miracle about Lazarus, were disciples of Jesus, and Mark and Luke, the authors of the other two Gospels, were in a position to learn the facts from eye witnesses. They impress us, too, as men who are sincere in what they tell us.

(b) Not duped or deceived. It is not likely that they who record the miracles and bear witness to them were deceived. They were quick-minded, strong, out-of-doors men, and just the men who would have the ability to pass judgment on a supposed miracle, such

as walking on the seas, quelling the tempest, or feeding five thousand people, healing the sick, or raising the dead. If Christ was only walking on a sunken reef in the sea of Galilee, these fishermen were the men best qualified to know that; or, if, as Renan claimed in the first edition of his *Life of Jesus,* Lazarus had himself buried alive so as to palm off a resurrection on the people, John, who relates the story of his resurrection, and his companions, who knew Lazarus well, were the very men best qualified to know what happened.

(c) Not deceivers. There is nothing to show that these men were deceivers or inventors. In the first place, there was no reason for them to invent these stories of great miracles done by Christ, for the more stories they invented, and the more miraculous power they attributed to Jesus, the more would they have become the victims of persecution and hatred. If the miracles were invented, it is not likely that the inventors in recording them would have said, for example, that John the Baptist had lost his faith in Jesus as the Messiah; nor would they have diminished the miraculous power of Christ by relating that when He was about to raise the daughter of Jairus, Jesus said, the "damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." And even if they did invent them, if the miracles are but a tissue of lies and fraud, you must account for what would be the greatest miracle of all, that liars and impostors were able to produce the sublime moral character of Jesus Christ. It would indeed, "take a Jesus to invent a Jesus," and not crude liars and impostors. Concerning

two of the great miracles of Christ, His healing of the blind man, and the raising of Lazarus, we know that they were officially examined into by the authorities, and when they made the examination they found that they could not disprove the miracle.

(d) The way in which the miracles are recorded. The time and the manner of the recording of the miracles, and the place where they were recorded, bear witness to their actuality. One might write a book about a supposed man who lived in some island of the sea, or in some remote country with which all historic connection had long since been broken. No one could prove or disprove the facts related about the man or men who lived in such places. But the miracles of the Gospel are located not far from a great city, Jerusalem, and in one of the most frequently visited of the Roman provinces, a part of the world which preserved its records, and a part of the world with which we have unbroken historic connection. As Paul said to Agrippa, "This thing was not done in a corner." The alleged miracles of Christianity were done in a way and at a time when men could observe them and could judge for themselves. In the case of some of the miracles, names, dates and places are given. Forgers would be very careful to leave all that out. Take this miracle about Lazarus. We have the name of the man who was raised up, the names of his sisters, the name of the town where he lived, the distance of the cemetery from the village, and the proximity of the village to Jerusalem. If the whole thing was a fraud or hoax,

there were those who would have been able to expose it, because well known places and persons were named. But instead of being easily refuted, the miracles could not be overthrown, either by contemporary foes or by succeeding generations. The worst that the Jews could do was to attribute the miraculous power of Christ to the power of the Devil, and the worst that the Pagans could do was to attribute his miraculous power to some kind of magic. It is very important to note, too, that we have a very early record of miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles. Long before the Gospels were written, Peter, speaking on the day of Pentecost, said, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourself also know." (Acts 2:22). Here Peter not only appealed to the miracles not long after they had been wrought, and when men were alive who could have refuted them, but appealed to the enemies of Christ themselves as men who had witnessed the miracles, that they were done in their midst. Very likely some of the very men who crowded about the tomb of Lazarus and saw him come forth were in Peter's audience on that day, and some of them, no doubt, were recognized by Peter as he preached.

(e) The miracles belong to Christ's public ministry only. The miracles which are recorded of Jesus all belong to his public ministry. This is in sharp contrast with the wild prodigies which apocryphal gospels and similar books record of Jesus in his childhood; such

fantastic works as making clay birds fly and turning his companions into kids for refusing to play with him.

4. *The Miracles and the Gospel stand or fall together.* In his book, *My Belief,* Robert Horton writes, "No wise apologist would identify faith in Jesus with belief in the miracles recorded in the Gospels." Then he goes on to say that in the future there will be many who will not accept the miracles of the Gospel but who will believe in Christ. It is true that when one says, "I believe in Christ," it means far more than mere belief that Christ walked on the sea and cleansed lepers, or opened the eyes of the blind, or raised Lazarus from his grave. But when I say that I believe in Jesus as my Saviour, I mean the historic Jesus who is revealed to us in the Scriptures. Certainly the Jesus of the Gospels worked miracles. Not only do we have the straightforward record of the miracles which he wrought, such as this at the grave of Lazarus, but we have his own repeated claim that he wrought miracles, as when he appealed to the people about the miracle of feeding the five thousand, and the miracle of feeding the three thousand, and when he told John's messengers to go and tell John what they had seen and heard, how the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the dead are raised up. Even if you were to delete from the Gospels, the account of all the miracles, you are still confronted by a Jesus who claims to work miracles. The miraculous is woven into the seamless garment of Christ, and you cannot take it out without rending and destroying the

garment. Not only is the unity of Christ's personality broken if we reject the miracles—for history knows but one Christ, the Christ of the Gospels, and that Christ worked miracles—but the integrity of Christ is destroyed. He claims to work miracles, he appeals to his miracles; and if he worked no miracles, then, he was either hallucinated, ignorant, or an impostor. We have, "branded with the plague spot of falsehood, the forehead of Christ, the forehead from which truth beams as from the center of the universe." And not only is Christ Himself discredited, but the Scriptures are discredited, the Scriptures which give us Christ. If they cannot be trusted as to these narratives which appear on almost every page of the Gospel, the narratives containing the miracles, then the Bible is thoroughly discredited as a witness to Jesus Christ, and as the Word of God.

5. *The Purpose of the Miracles.* The purpose of the miracles is stated in that sentence spoken by Jesus when he summoned Lazarus to come forth from his grave, "That they may know that Thou hast sent me."

When the Scribes and Pharisees were finding fault with him because he claimed that power which belongs to God alone, the power to forgive a man his sins, Jesus accepted their challenge and said, "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (Then saith he to the sick of the palsey,) Arise, take up thy bed and go to thine house." The miracles lead men to believe. In the case of the resurrection of Lazarus, so many believed that the

enemies of Christ, frightened at the influence of such a teacher, plotted a double murder, first to kill Jesus, and then to kill Lazarus, the living witness to the power of Jesus.

The miracles which prove Christ to be our Saviour and Redeemer, the Eternal Son of God, also illustrate and reveal Jesus. If you were to take out of the Gospels the stories of the miracles of Jesus, what a different book the New Testament would be. All the tenderness and sympathy and compassion of Christ would have withered out of the Gospel. It is Christ as the worker of miracles who speaks to the heart of man. There we have Him as the great Comforter, Friend, Sympathizer, Companion and Saviour, the sympathizing Jesus. When Jesus was gently upbraided the second time by Mary because He had not been there to keep Lazarus from the gates of death, Jesus, seeing her distress, wept. This same miracle which shows the divine power of Christ, his power to raise the dead, also reveals the infinite tenderness and compassion of Jesus. The miracles let us know that we have not an great high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one who was in all points tempted like as we are, one who is afflicted in our afflictions and who sorrows in our sorrows. Yes, it is the miracles which bring us close to the heart of Christ.

When I see him cast out the demons, I know that he can cast sin out of my heart. When I see him in tears at the grave of Lazarus, and then see Lazarus at his command come forth, with the napkin still about

his head, I take comfort about my own beloved dead.

How great seems the victory of the grave, how deep and not to be healed the wound and sting of sin. To believe that the dead shall live again, to believe that them also that sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him, I must have nothing less than such proof as this, that Christ said to Lazarus, "Come forth," and Lazarus came forth from the land of the dead into the land of the living. When we say that we believe in the Resurrection of the body, we put our trust and hope in One who said, "I am the Resurrection, and the Life: He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." He who said that had for a certificate and for a seal and confirmation the mighty fact of the resurrection of Lazarus. Because he raised Lazarus from the dead, I can believe that he will raise my dead, my brothers, my sisters, my father, my mother.

God would have all men to be saved. He would have all men receive the gift of the forgiveness of sin. He chooses to bestow that gift upon the ground of Christ's death and suffering on the cross, and the gift becomes ours through our faith in Christ. In order to help us to have faith in Christ, to believe that he is the Son of God, that he has power on earth, and in Heaven to forgive sin, God testified to Christ, bore witness to him by mighty signs and wonders, and thus "manifested forth his glory."

VI.

THE FULFILLED PREDICTIONS OF THE BIBLE

No man can unlock the door of the future. Even the wisest man cannot penetrate the secrets of futurity. Anyone, however, can make a shrewd guess. When Croesus consulted the Delphic oracle as to his contemplated war against the Persians, he was told he would destroy a great empire. That was a safe prediction; for whether Croesus or the Persians were victorious in the war, a great empire would be destroyed. Seneca predicted that the Shetland Islands would one day be no longer the limits of the inhabited world. That, also, was a sensible conclusion; but not prophecy. A trained scientist can predict heavenly movements a long time in advance. The astronomers who observed the transit of Venus at Aiken, South Carolina, left the stone on which their meridian circle rested for the use of those who in June, 2004, will have need of it to watch another transit. These astronomers knew to a certainty that at that period, far in the future, Venus would cross the disc of the sun. That is calculation, not prophecy.

Neither is it prophecy to venture generalities about the future. In the famous passage in his Review of

Ranke's *History of the Popes,* Macaulay predicted the lasting prosperity of the Catholic Church, when a traveler from New Zealand, in the midst of a vast solitude, should stand on a broken arch of London Bridge and sketch the ruins of St. Paul's. In view of what has happened to great cities and kingdoms in the past, anyone could have made a similar prediction. But that is not prophecy. If Macaulay had named the century when London would be destroyed, and the kingdom or conqueror who would destroy it, that would have been prophecy, the sort of thing we meet with in the Old Testament. But Macaulay was wise enough not to attempt a prediction of that nature. As Justin Martyr, who himself was converted from paganism by the evidence of prophecy, has well put it: "To declare a thing should come to pass long before it is in being, and to bring it to pass, this or nothing is the work of God."

Prophecies abound everywhere in the Bible. Prophecy utters its voice, first of all, in the third chapter of the first book, where it foretells deliverance from sin; and it utters its last prediction in the last chapter of the Bible. It is the golden chain which holds together all the books and all the facts and all the hopes of the Bible. The grand theme of the prophecies is Christ, for to Him, as Peter said in his sermon to Cornelius, "*all* the prophets bear witness." In the Bible we have, generally speaking, three classes of predictions or prophecies: first, those relating to the Jews; second, those relating to the heathen nations; and third, those

which foretell the coming of Christ, and those which Christ Himself uttered, some of which have not yet been fulfilled.

1. *Prophecies relating to the Jews.* Frederick the Great once asked his chaplain to prove to him in a single sentence that there was a God. The chaplain answered, "The Jews, your Majesty." He could not have given a better answer. The Jew is God's autograph. In the Old Testament we have a series of predictions about the Jews, many of which have been fulfilled. To Abraham God said, "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge; and afterward they shall come out with great substance." (Gen. 15:14). No one today doubts that the Jews were exiles for centuries in Egypt, or that they were delivered out of the land of Egypt and the house of bondage. Centuries later, Jeremiah predicted the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the captivity of the people in Babylon; but also that after seventy years God would visit them and cause them to return to their native land. One hundred and sixty years before these events took place Isaiah had foretold this deliverance and called the deliverer by name: "That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shall be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." In the Book of Ezra we have the story of the fulfillment of this proph-

ecy, and how when Cyrus captured Babylon, one of the first acts of his reign was an edict permitting the Jews to go back to Jerusalem (Jeremiah 32:28; 29:10; Isaiah 44:28; Ezra 1:2,3).

In the 29th chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy, and the 26th chapter of the Book of Leviticus, there is a catalogue of the woes and sufferings which are to be the lot of the Hebrew people, how they will be scattered among all nations, from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth. In fulfillment of this prophecy God has scattered the Jews throughout the world. Nation after nation has risen up against them to conquer them, take them captive, persecute them, and afflict them. Yet the Jews have survived. This, too, was predicted. Always, amid the crash of impending judgments, we can hear the note of promise of deliverance and restoration. God says He will always leave to Himself a faithful remnant. "Neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them" (Lev. 26:44). "I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee." (Jeremiah 46:28). Israel has been flung among all nations. But the nations which persecuted her have perished. The Jews remain.

2. *Prophecies relating to the Heathen Nations.* (a) The Destruction of Tyre. Tyre, the Phoenician capital, was one of the great cities and kingdoms of the ancient world. From Tyre went forth the colonies which founded the empire of Carthage. In his Life of

Alexander the Great, Benjamin Ide Wheeler, the former president of the University of California, describing the siege of Tyre by Alexander, quotes the 27th chapter of the Book of Ezekiel, and says of it, "This 27th chapter of Ezekiel, from which we cite, contains, among all the records of the past, the fullest and most accurate account of the trade and trade relations of the famous city."[1] It was written during Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Tyre, and while Ezekiel was a captive at Babylon. The chapter from which Dr. Wheeler quotes describes the splendor and pomp of Tyre, a "city perfected in beauty;" how all the nations contributed to her glory and power; the far flung lines of her commerce, bringing ivory from Cyprus, cedars from Lebanon, fine linen from Egypt, blue and purple from North Africa, riches from Spain, brass from Ionia and Greece; and how the captives of other nations were her seamen and galley slaves, and how these navies had carried the name and the splendor of Tyre throughout the world. Then Ezekiel describes the destruction of the great city, telling of the siege of Nebuchadnezzar, which partly destroyed the city; but looking forward, no doubt, also, to the siege centuries later when Alexander destroyed the place. Predicting Tyre's utter destruction, Ezekiel said, "They shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water. And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard. And I will make

1. Wheeler, B. I., *Alexander the Great*, page 308.

thee like the top of a rock: Thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more." When Alexander besieged Tyre in 332 B.C., unable to get at the new fortress of the city which had been built on the rock, some distance from the mainland, and having no fleet with him, he took the materials from the ruins of the old city destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and built a causeway across the water to the wall of the city. Thus the very stones and timbers and dust of the old Tyre, as Ezekiel had predicted eleven centuries before, were laid in the midst of the waters. God said, "I will make thee like the top of a rock." Today, one can see the fisherman spreading his nets to dry on the rocks where Tyre once stood.[1]

(b) Nineveh. For six hundred years, Nineveh was the mistress of the world, one of the greatest empires of antiquity. Mounds of human heads marked the triumphal march of her soldier kings across the world, and their sculptured monuments tell the grim story of conquest and extermination. Yet in the midst of her splendor and power the Hebrew prophets predicted the overthrow and annihilation of the city. In a passage of great power and eloquence the prophet Nahum described the siege of Nineveh; chariots raging in her streets; the flashing of scarlet uniforms; the forest of brandished spears; the rumbling of the wheels, the hoofs of the charging cavalry; the spoiling of temples and palaces, and the heaps of corpses. When the Medes

1. Stopping to view the ruins of Tyre in 1931 the first thing the author saw was a naked fisherman spreading his nets on the rocks.

and the Persians destroyed Nineveh, they were aided by a sudden rise of the Tigris which undermined and swept away a portion of the city's walls. Even this seems to have been predicted by Nahum, who said: "The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palaces shall be dissolved." Another prophet, Zephaniah, foretold the complete desolation of the city, (God) "will make Nineveh a desolation. . . . Herds shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the pelican and the porcupine, shall lodge in the capitals thereof; their voice shall sing in the windows. . . . How is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! Everyone that passes by her shall hiss, and wag his hand." (Zephaniah 2:13-15 A.R.V.)

These predictions were literally fulfilled. The historian, writing of Nineveh says, "Other empires have been subjugated; Nineveh was annihilated." Two hundred years after the fall of Nineveh, Xenophon, marching with the ill-fated 10,000 Greeks, passed near the site of Nineveh, and noted the heap of ruins; but not a man in the army knew what city it had been. Not until the year 1865, when almost twenty-five centuries had passed, did the spade of the archaeologist bring to light the ruins of Nineveh. Through His prophet God said of Nineveh, "I will make thy grave; for thou art vile." How deep a grave He dug for Nineveh, you can see today if you go to visit that dismal heap on the banks of the tawny Tigris.

(c) Babylon. Babylon was the world empire which followed the Assyrian. Its capital was on the banks of

the Euphrates. Prophet after prophet hurls his anathema against Babylon, and even in Christian times, Babylon is the name given in Revelation to the enemies of the Church. In Babylon were the Hanging Gardens of Nebuchadnezzar, built for his Medean wife. There, too, was the temple of Belus, the highest structure ever raised by the hand of man. Around the city ran the great wall, seventy-five feet high, eighty feet broad. Within this vast enclosure were gardens, temples, and palaces, markets and quays, bridges and tunnels, with the Euphrates running through the city. Cyrus captured Babylon 538 B.C., while Belshazzar revelled with his drunken lords. By a great engineering feat, Cyrus diverted the Euphrates from its course, and marched under the great gates of the city by the river bed. All this was foretold by the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, (Isaiah chap. 21; Jeremiah 51:1). What the Hebrew prophets predicted, Xenophon and Herodotus relate in their histories. In one of the most sublime passages of the Bible, Isaiah predicts the fall and desolation of Babylon: "And Babylon, the glory of the kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Solom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there and satyrs shall dwell there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their

desolate houses and dragons in their pleasant palaces." (Isaiah 13.) Today, Babylon is all that prophet foretold. The overflow of the Euphrates has filled its site with stagnant pools of water. Reptiles, jackals, and hyenas inhabit the holes and caverns where once the city stood. The superstitious Arabian will not pitch his tent on the site of the city. Babylon has become a heap. "How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, son of the morning? How art thou cut down to the ground, that didst lay low the nations?"

The remarkable fulfillment of the predictions of the Hebrew prophets concerning the destruction of the ancient empires is a mighty and irrefragable witness to the credibility and divine origin of the Old Testament Scriptures. The way in which these prophecies have been fulfilled compel us to give serious thought to other predictions which the Old Testament makes concerning Christ and His Kingdom. Volney, in his eloquent, but rather atheistic work, *Ruins of Empires,* invokes the spirit of the past and hears the Phantom utter its voice amid the ruins of Palmyra of the Desert and warn the living generation against repeating the follies of the past. The Christian believer standing amid the ruins of Tyre, Nineveh, Babylon and Egypt, hears no Phantom speaking, but catches the echoes of the mighty voices of the prophets, proclaiming that the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

3. *Predictions relating to Christ.* The Old Testament looks forward to a great event and to the coming of a Great Person. John the Baptist, in his hour of

doubt, as he lay in the dungeon of Herod on the shores of the Dead Sea, sent to Christ and said, "Art Thou He that should come?" The Scriptures made it clear that One was to come. When Christ came, He claimed that He was that One. He said that Moses wrote of Him, that the Scriptures testified of Him; and in His Resurrection He told His disciples that all the things written of Him in the Book of Moses, in the Prophets and in the Psalms were fulfilled in Him. The same testimony was made by the apostles of Jesus when they went out to preach the Gospel. The great evidence to which they appealed was the fulfillment of prophecy. Every sermon they preached echoed those words of Peter, "To Him all the prophets bear witness."

Even if the correspondence between Old Testament predictions and the life of Christ was not so marked, we should be compelled, because of the testimony of Jesus, to search the Scriptures of the Old Testament and see what was written there concerning Him. After the fall of man there is the promise that this fall is not irrevocable, and that the Seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent. Abraham is told that through his descendants the whole earth will be blessed. Moses tells the people that in the future God will raise up another great Prophet. Even prophets outside of Israel, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, predict the coming and triumph of a mysterious Person; as when Balaam said on the mount in Moab, as he surveyed the encampment of Israel: "I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him but not nigh: there shall come a

star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel." (Numbers 24:17). The great reign of David, and of his successor, Solomon, serves as a foil to illustrate a greater kingdom and king of the future, one whose name is to endure forever, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end. The great prophets foretell a suffering and atoning Servant, or Messiah, Who through death and suffering shall lead the people to a state of happiness and glory, when peace shall be as lasting as the moon in the firmament and the whole earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. Sometimes it is a King, sometimes a Priest, and sometimes a Prophet who is predicted.

The mysterious One is to be of the Tribe of Judah, of the line of David, and to be born at Bethlehem. His coming was to be preceded by a great prophet, who should prepare his way with a proclamation of repentance and righteousness. He would work miracles; heal the sick; raise the dead; ride into Jerusalem upon the foal of an ass; be sold for thirty pieces of silver; be mocked and reviled; drink gall and vinegar; have His garments divided by lot; be buried in a rich man's grave, yet His body would not see corruption; and through the diffusion of His Gospel He would bring in everlasting righteousness.

Suppose, now, that a man who had never seen the Bible were given a copy of the New Testament. There he would discover that one named Jesus passed through all these experiences. Then, let us suppose that he is given a copy of the Old Testament. Having read the

Old Testament, he discovers this remarkable correspondence between the history of Jesus and the predictions of the Old Testament. Perplexed as to this, he might ask if it was not just an accidental coincidence. Our answer would be that this could not be. If there were just one incident predicted in the Old Testament, and repeated in the life of Jesus, we might say that it was a coincidence. But where there are so many, accident and coincidence are ruled out of the question. Then, he might ask us, Is it possible that the prophecies of the Old Testament post-date the events recorded in the New Testament? Again, we would say to Him, No; for everyone knows that the Old Testament, as we have it today, was translated into the Greek language, in the translation called the Septuagint, three hundred years before Christ. Again, he might ask us, Is it possible that there was collusion or invention? But this could not have been because of the nature of the events. How could anyone conspire to have Christ born in Bethlehem? No hand, save the hand of God, could have shaped events so as to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies.

Finally, this student of the Bible might ask, Is it possible that the predictions refer to some other man? If so, where is that other man? Certainly not Socrates, Plato, Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, Mohammed, Luther, Napoleon. In the life of no person before Christ, or since His death, are there incidents which fit into the Old Testament descriptions of the Messiah.

We are thus left to one of two conclusions; either

the prophecies are yet to be fulfilled, or Christ has fulfilled them. But what greater and fuller and more striking fulfillment of them could be imagined than that which we have in the life of Jesus? Can you conceive of any figure arising in the future and giving greater evidence than Jesus did, that to him all the prophets bear witness? Taken by themselves, many of the predictions were inexplicable and contradictory. How could He Who was to come be both a mighty Conqueror, and be despised and rejected of men; and at the same time a Priest, a Prophet, and a King? Yet when Christ came, all the ancient predictions converged and harmonized in Him.

This study of the predictions of the Old Testament is sufficient to let us know, as Peter said, that we have not followed cunningly devised tales or old wives' fables, but the words of men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. It confirms our faith in Christ as our Saviour and Redeemer, and strengthens our belief that in the Bible we have a "sure word of prophecy", an infallible guide, a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in our hearts.

4. *Fulfillment of the Prophecies made by Christ.* Christ was not only the grand theme of prophecy, and not only the one in whom Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled, but he was the author of great predictions as to the future. During his ministry he foretold events which were very speedily fulfilled, such as the treason and apostasy of Judas, the denial of Peter, and

his own death and resurrection. But beyond these events which touched upon his own life and death, our Lord uttered prophecies as to the great events of the future ages. Many of his parables, such as the Ten Virgins, the Talents, the Husbandmen, the Wheat and the Tares, the Measure of Wheat and the Leaven, deal with future or with final aspects of the Kingdom which he had come to establish. Some of these predictions center about his coming the second time and the end of the world, and therefore are yet to be fulfilled. But others have already been fulfilled.

The most striking of these are those which he uttered concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the fate of the Jews. These predictions are to be found in his great discourse delivered on the Mount of Olives in the last week of his life. We have the record of this address in Matthew 24, Luke 21, and Mark 13, with a few other passages. In this discourse it is not easy to separate what he says about the destruction of Jerusalem from what he says about the end of the world. It may be that there are some things said here by Christ which are applicable equally to the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. But of this we may be sure, that there are many things predicted here as taking place at the destruction of Jerusalem.

The events incident to the destruction of Babylon and the fall of Nineveh and Tyre are not very clearly recorded in secular history; but what is recorded corresponds in a remarkable manner with what the ancient Hebrew prophets had predicted. But in the case of the

siege and fall and destruction of Jerusalem there is probably no similar event in all history concerning which we have such full and reliable information. This information comes to us from the works of the great Hebrew historian, Josephus. Josephus was born soon after Christ was crucified, and through friendship with Poppaea, the empress of Nero, had seen much of Rome and Rome's greatness. When the great rebellion of 66 A.D. took place, Josephus was a governor of the province of Galilee. As commander of the forces in the garrison of Jotapata, Josephus distinguished himself by heroic resistance to the Roman general Vespasian, who had been sent by Nero to subdue the rebellious Jews. When the fortress fell Josephus with forty others hid in a cave. There he persuaded his companions to kill one another, rather than fall into the hands of the Romans or commit suicide. The second was to kill the first and so on. Josephus was fortunate to draw the last number when the lot was cast, and when only two were left alive he persuaded his destined victim to live. Thus spared, Josephus surrendered to the Romans and after two years' confinement became attached to the family of the new emperor, Vespasian. When Titus besieged Jerusalem, Josephus was at his headquarters and acted as an intermediary between Titus and the Jews. He was therefore in the best of situations to observe the progress of the siege and to record its events. Both Vespasian and Titus testify as to the accuracy of his history. His chapter telling of the fall of Jerusalem is one of the most graphic pieces of writing in all historical literature.

We have, therefore, in the history of Josephus the best possible data for testing the predictions of Jesus. Let us now proceed to compare the predictions with the history.

(a) Wars and commotions. When Christ uttered this prophecy the whole world was wrapped in the peace of Rome. The Jews also were at peace with themselves. It seemed unthinkable that the Jews should revolt against mighty Rome. Nevertheless, rumors of war came, and so great was the public anxiety that the fields lay uncultivated. Disorder and rebellion broke out all over the world. In Alexandria, Caesarea, Damascus, Tyre, and almost every city where Jews and heathen lived together there was violence, massacre, and disorder. Italy was in the throes of a civil war, and four Roman emperors suffered death in the space of two years. The great and unexpected revolt of the Jews against Rome took place in 66 A.D. Indiscreet acts on the part of the Roman authorities roused the Jewish people to a frenzy of anger and patriotism. Their short and disastrous war with the power of Rome was one of the bravest but most horrible struggles in the annals of mankind.

(b) The Signs of the Times. False Christ and False Prophets. "Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many. And many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many." (Matthew 24:5, 11.) "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders." (Matthew 24:24.) Up to this time there had been

nothing in Jewish history such as the propaganda of false Christs. But ere long they began to appear. We speak of false teachers today as fulfilling such a prophecy. Perhaps they do. But the worst of these false teachers today does not dare to say that he is the Christ. But in Israel after the death of Christ such impostors appeared. Simon Magus, "to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest," deceived the people of Samaria with signs and sorceries, giving himself out to be the power of God. (Acts 8:10.) Theudas (not the Theudas of Acts) led the people into the wilderness promising to divide the waters of the Jordan. The prophecy of Christ warned them against the desert impostors, saying, "If they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe not it." Josephus says that when the Roman soldiers destroyed the temple buildings they slew great numbers of the Jews in the cloisters and secret chambers of the temple, who had been led there by a false prophet who had told them that in the temple they would receive miraculous signs for their deliverance.

(c) Famines, pestilences and earthquakes in divers places. In the eleventh chapter of the Book of Acts we have the record of a great famine over all the earth in the reign of Claudius. During this famine the Christians at Antioch contributed to the relief of the brethren at Jerusalem, where the suffering from the famine was greater than elsewhere. The Roman historians, as well as Josephus, tell us of earthquakes and pestilence. Jose-

phus describing an earthquake in Judaea says of it, "Anyone might easily conjecture that these wonders foreshadowed some grand calamities that were coming."

(d) "Fearful sights and great signs from heaven." Josephus tells of a star in the shape of a sword that stood over the city and a comet that continued for a year. The eastern gate of the inner court of the temple opened of its own accord at the sixth hour of the night. In the sunset clouds men saw chariots and troops of soldiers. The Roman historian Tacitus writes, "Armies were seen fighting in the air with brandished weapons. A fire fell on the temple from the clouds. All of which things were supposed by some to portend great calamities." It matters not what we think as to the actuality of these alleged occurrences: the fact is that in the minds of people there was dread, misgiving, and alarm. Both Jew and Roman felt that they were seeing signs and wonders.

(e) The Persecution of the Christians. "They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. (Luke 21:12) They . . . shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." (Matt. 24:9) The Book of Acts tells us how this prediction was fulfilled. Saul made havoc of the Church; punishing the Christians in every synagogue, and persecuting them even unto strange cities. James was slaughtered by Herod; John and Paul were imprisoned. Stephen was stoned. John alone of the disciples seems to have es-

caped martyrdom. In Rome, Nero drove his chariot through the imperial gardens between rows of Christians wrapped in blazing tar.

Christ also foretold the apostasy of many Christians; how they would betray one another and hate one another because their love had waxed cold. During the Roman persecutions many of the Christians recanted and betrayed their fellow Christians.

(f) The Immunity of the Christians during the siege of Jerusalem. In the midst of Christ's description of the sufferings of the people and the disciples there comes this prediction, "And not a hair of your head shall perish." However we are to take this, the singular thing is that there is no record of a single Christian perishing in the siege of Jerusalem. The words of Christ in another place intimate that they will have an opportunity to escape, though the time will be short. Josephus relates that when the city was first beleaguered by Cestius Gaius, arrangements were being made within the walls for the surrender of the city. But, for some unknown reason, Gaius drew off his forces, and great multitudes, embracing this opportunity, fled to the mountains. Among the refugees were the Christians, who crossed the Jordan and took refuge in the mountain city of Pella. Thus were fulfilled the words of Jesus, "Let them which are in Judaea, flee to the mountains."

(g) The Widespread Diffusion of the Gospel. "This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations." (Matthew

THE LIBRARY
Union Theological Seminary
RICHMOND, VA.

24:1.) Between the time when Jesus was speaking and the end of Jerusalem, if that is the end he means, there intervened but forty years. A few days after uttering this prediction its author was crucified as a malefactor. Who but He who spoke by the power of God could have dared to say that in a generation the gospel of a crucified malefactor would be preached throughout the world? Yet so it came to pass. The whole ancient world had heard the story of the Cross. The very names of the letters of Paul in the New Testament tell us how the whole Roman world had heard the Gospel. Ten years before the fall of Jerusalem, St. Paul declares that the Christian faith was "spoken of throughout the world,"[1] and to the Colossians, seven years before the end came, Paul wrote that the Gospel had been preached to "every creature under heaven," meaning that men of all nations and races had heard it. We hardly know which is the greater miracle, the more to be wondered at, the rapid spread of Christianity throughout the world, in spite of deadly hatred and opposition and persecution, and by purely spiritual means, or the "prophetic eye by which the Saviour predicted that this would be."

(h) The Wall of Titus. When our Lord wept over the city, He said, "The days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, and shall keep thee in on every side." (Luke 19:43, A.R.V.) When Titus commenced the siege of Jerusalem, he attempted to take the city by

1. Meaning the Roman, or Mediterranean world.

storm and erected great towers over against the fortifications, by which his soldiers could scale the walls. When these efforts were repulsed, Titus resorted to a rather extraordinary military device, and one which was contrary to the advice given by his commanders at the council of war which he held after his repulse. Jerusalem, except where the rugged topography of the ground afforded sufficient protection from assault by an army, was surrounded with three great walls, with formidable towers at intervals. Titus proceeded to encircle the city with a fourth wall, or palisade, of his own. This wall was thirty-nine furlongs, or five miles in length. The completion of this wall doomed the city, for it made impossible successful sorties, and by shutting off supplies from the outside, brought starvation to the inhabitants.

(i) The Tribulation and Suffering of the Siege. Our Lord, predicting the horrors of the fall of Jerusalem said, "For those days shall be tribulation, such as there hath not been the like from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never shall be." (Mark 13:19, A.R.V.) To that prediction answers the narrative of Josephus: "No other city ever saw such miseries, nor was ever a generation more fruitful in wickedness from the beginning of the world. It appears that the misfortunes of all men from the beginning of the world, or comparable to those of the Jews, are not so considerable. The multitude who perished exceeded all the destructions that man or God ever brought on the world."

The reading of the pages of Josephus' account of the siege is like a descent into hell. While the Romans assaulted from without, civil discord and faction tore the populace within with an unbelievable ferocity. The horrors of starvation, instead of inducing the Jews to surrender, as so often has been the case in other sieges, only served to inflame their fanaticism and rage. As the crowning horror of the famine, Josephus relates the following incident. Prowling miscreants, entering and searching houses for food, smelled the scent of food in the house of one Mary. They at once entered and told her they would cut her throat unless she produced immediately the food which they scented. The woman replied that she had preserved a fine portion of the roast lamb for them, and at the same time uncovered the undevoured half of her own infant! Hundreds of Jews were captured in sorties from the city, and these Titus had crucified in the sight of the walls, till "room was wanting for the crosses and crosses wanting for the bodies." The ground about the walls was a ghastly avenue of mangled bodies. So terrible was the spectacle that Caesar lifted his hands to heaven, and uttering a groan, called God to witness that this was not his doing. When the Romans effected an entrance into the city, the slaughter in the streets was so great that fires which had been started were extinguished by the streams of blood. Josephus gives the number of those who perished in the siege as one million, one hundred thousand. Other historians say the number cannot have been far short of this, for nearly the whole male

population of Judaea had gone up to Jerusalem to the celebration of the Passover when the siege commenced.

(j) The Destruction of the Temple. The glory of Jerusalem and of Israel was the temple and its associated buildings. The first temple, Solomon's, had been burned by Nebuchadnezzar, 586 B.C. Seventy years later Zerrubabel's temple replaced it. This temple suffered much by wars and sieges, and in 20 B.C. Herod the Great got the permission of the Jews to restore and enlarge the temple. This work of reconstruction went on for eighty years. When Titus took the city, the temple was more than a shrine; it was a great series of buildings and cloisters and colonnades and courts and towers and fortifications, covering an area of nineteen acres. On some sides of the enclosure the walls were eight hundred feet in height. In the wall and towers were massive stones, the largest measuring sixty-five feet in length, eight in height, and ten in breadth. As for the beauty of the temple itself, let Josephus bear witness: "Now the outward face of the temple in the front wanted nothing that was likely to excite either admiration or astonishment; for it was covered all over with plates of gold, of great weight; and at the first rising of the sun reflected back a very fiery splendor, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it, to turn their eyes away; just as they would have done at the sun's rays. But this temple appeared to strangers, when they were coming to it at a distance, like a mountain covered with snow."[1]

1. Josephus, Wars, 5:5.

Such was the glorious structure out of which Jesus came with his disciples on that Tuesday of the last week of His life. In his lamentation over Jerusalem, Jesus had predicted the utter desolation of the temple, "Your house is left unto you desolate." It was no wonder that the disciples as they came out began to show him the buildings of the temple, and said, "Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings." Jesus answered, "Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, which shall not be thrown down." This prediction seemed then not only unlikely of fulfillment, but impossible of fulfillment; unlikely, because even the pagan armies often spared the temples of the cities which they took; (the remains of such temples like the Parthenon, may still be seen of man) impossible, because of the foundations which had been constructed through the ages, and the massive stones in wall and tower. But all that Jesus had prophesied came true. When Titus was done with Jerusalem and the temple there was not one stone left upon another. Josephus says that the walls were dug up to the very foundation, so that "there was left nothing to make those who came thither believe it had ever been inhabited. This was the end which Jerusalem came to, a city otherwise of great magnificence, and of mighty fame among all mankind."

It was not the design of Titus to destroy the temple itself. That noble building he planned to preserve. The Jews themselves had fired the outer cloister as protection against the Romans, and Titus despatched

troops to extinguish the flames. While they were thus engaged, a legionary took a brand and hurled it through a golden window of the inner sanctuary. Titus and his officers rushed among the troops, and by word, gesture and blow endeavored to restrain them. But all their efforts were in vain. Another soldier threw a brand into the Holy of Holies and the whole house went up in smoke and flame, Jews and Romans alike perishing in the holocaust. "Not one stone was left upon another."

(k) The Future Humiliation and Desolation of Jerusalem. Christ declared that Jerusalem "shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Eighteen centuries and a half have rolled away since Titus took Jerusalem, and the best possible summary of its history during those centuries is the prediction of Christ, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles." Titus planted his eagles, the imperial emblem that surmounted the Roman standard, over the ruins of the temple. In 135 A.D. the Emperor Hadrian built an altar to Jupiter on the site of the temple. In 136 A.D. the Emperor Julian the Apostate, in order to defeat the prophecy of Christ, undertook to rebuild the temple; but his plans were frustrated by flames that burst from the long-sealed chambers in the foundations. Today a Mohammedan mosque occupies the site of the temple of Solomon. Movements have come and gone, but still Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles.

Part Two

THE CHRISTIAN WAY

I.

THE WAY, THE OLDEST NAME FOR THE CHURCH

The oldest name for Christianity is that which was given it when it first appeared in the world, and which occurs so frequently in the Acts of the Apostles, "This Way," the "Men of the Way." It is quite probable that like the name "Christian," first given to believers at Antioch, this name, "The Way," was also in the beginning a term of contempt and opprobrium, an epithet rather than a name. But it is a glorious name. The unbelievers of Jerusalem and Antioch and elsewhere, however deeply they despised the Christians, clearly saw that their way of life was altogether different from the way of this world. In a great passage St. Paul said that God brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. (II Timothy 1:10.) We must not confine this to the life to come. Christ revealed to men the true principles of life in this world, as well as in the world to come; and wherever men have followed those principles, wherever they have taken the Way, there has been the light of justice and of peace.

The morality of Christianity, or the Christian Way of Life, is adapted perfectly to man. The chief com-

plaint made against the Christian morality is that it is so true and perfect that it is unattainable. But for that reason are we to recommend counsels of imperfection? The English philosopher, John Locke, had it in his mind to write a work of ethics, but he finally abandoned the project, saying that in the New Testament we have a perfect system of ethics, one upon which it is impossible to make any improvement. "The gospel contains so perfect a body of ethics, that reason may be excused for that inquiry, since she may find man's duty clearer and easier in revelation than in herself."

Almost two thousand years have passed away since Jesus uttered his precepts; yet where in all those centuries has there been any addition made to what was taught by the unlettered Galilean? If we were to come upon a system of morality manifestly superior to that taught by Jesus and the apostles, we should be bound to relinquish Christianity and adopt the new religion. But so perfect is the truth taught by Christ that we cannot even conceive of any amendment or improvement. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold." (Psalm 19:7-10.) In that great Psalm the singer commenced with show-

ing how the heavens, the physical universe, declare the glory of the Lord, and from that he proceeds to tell how the revealed law of God displays His glory in the moral universe. That law found its final expression and illustration in the life and teachings, the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the "express image of His person."

As a teacher Christ was remarkable for what He *omitted,* as well as for what He taught. Poetry, philosophy, oratory, past and present, have much to say upon such themes as friendship, patriotism, courage. But Christ had nothing to say about these virtues, as commonly thought of by mankind. The friendship that He emphasized was the divine friendship, the patriotism that He inculcated was that for the Kingdom of God, and the courage which He taught and illustrated in His life and death was not that of the field of battle, but devotion to principle and fidelity to God. He not only omitted some of the popular virtues, so-called, but He spent much time upon those little esteemed by man. He spake of the despised virtues of repentance, meekness, patience, humility. He who might have taken a sword, or might have seized a sceptre, took a towel and girded himself and set an example for His disciples. He taught men that they were to disregard the thought of publicity or fame in their actions, and think only of love for God. He taught men to regulate their actions by first regulating their thoughts, and traced sin back to its genesis and hiding place in the heart.

The most beautiful, and the most unique and the most difficult, of the laws of Christ was that concerning forgiveness. This law has been so associated with Jesus that when we speak of the "Christian spirit," that is what is meant. He who in His death on Calvary was to become the ground of God's forgiveness of man's sin, gave to men the law of brotherly love and forgiveness. To a world that neither forgave its enemies nor thought it honorable to do so, Jesus left His prayer, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive those that are our debtors." As Dr. Seeley puts it in "Ecce Homo," paraphrasing the language of Genesis, "The spirit of Jesus brooded upon the face of the waters, and there was forgiveness." Such a book as Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables,* with its fine exhibitions of self-forgetfulness and forgiveness, could not have been read, and would not have been understood if it could, before Christ came. The actions of the Bishop and the ex-convict are reasonable and conceivable only in the light of what Christ taught.

St. Paul's great assertion that Christ "brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel," is not to be interpreted solely with regard to Christianity's teaching and assurance as to the life to come. It was not only immortality, but *life* that Christ brought to light. He brought out into the light the duties and obligations of our life in time in true relationship to our life hereafter. The Koran is filled with enthusiastic descriptions of the sensual bliss of heaven. But Jesus, although He was most reticent on the subject of the

details of our life hereafter, connected time and eternity, life here and life to come, in such a manner as to influence profoundly our conduct here, showing us that time was a probation for life to come. Always in His teaching there is that deep diapason of the note of the life to come as a consideration for our life in time, and when He speaks He seems to be standing under the cope of the eternal world. Yet this great effect and impression He was able to produce without any fantastic descriptions of heaven. His teaching, and above all His own life, is a mighty affirmation of life to come. His brief words leave us absolutely certain as to the future happiness of the good and the misery of the bad. For the rest, a solemn silence is maintained.

The morality of Christianity is summed up in the two great precepts of Christ, which He illustrated by life and parable, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, and thy neighbor as thyself." When all men seriously try to follow that law we shall have a new heaven and a new earth. It might be replied that disease, and the hostility of human nature, and death itself would still remain to vex man's life and cast a deep shadow over his lot. That is true, and these will remain unto the end, until Christ shall come and regenerate the platform of man's existence. But in spite of diseases, and accidents, and the austerities of nature, and the certainty of the grave, a humanity which lived by this law of Christ, love to God and man, would be a humanity renewed. In a world where love was the law of life man could bear with resignation the severities

of his existence.

These are a few of the ethical teachings of Jesus. Whence hath this man this wisdom? Suppose, what is not true, that *all* the sayings of Jesus can be paralleled in some other teacher, Greek, Roman, Oriental. What of that? Jesus never read them or saw them. Instead of being an illiterate Galilean peasant, are we to think that He was in reality a sage and learned philosopher? Or must we conclude that learned and gifted men in the early age of the Christian history wrote these profound and simple precepts and put them in the mouth of the man of Galilee? But we know the measure and the compass and the style of the writers of that early period. Not one of them could have written these laws. There is only one explanation, that of the Gospels themselves, that Jesus of Nazareth spake these words, and that their power and truth and universal suitability to man come from the fact that He who spake them came from God. "Never man spake as this man." Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall never pass away." Which one of the words of Jesus has passed away during the nineteen hundred years since the world last heard Him speak? Which one of His principles shows any sign of fading out of the firmament of truth and power? Romanes was impressed with this when he said, "One of the strongest pieces of objective evidence for Christianity is not sufficiently enforced by apologists. It is the absence from the biography of Christ of any doctrine which the subsequent growth of human knowl-

edge—whether in natural science, ethics, political economy, or elsewhere—has had to discount. This negative argument is really almost as strong as the positive one from what Christ did teach. For when we consider what a large number of sayings are recorded of Him, it becomes most remarkable that in literal truth there is no reason why any of His words should ever pass away in the sense of becoming obsolete."[1]

1. *The Enmity of the Present Age to Christian Morality.* The world has ever been at enmity with the Christian Way. The way of the world and the way of Christ are ever in opposition and conflict. But today there is an emergence of what St. John aptly describes as the Beast. In this revival of paganism there is a vast drive against the Christian Way, against Christian ethics and the concepts of Christian life. The ruling law of paganism was pleasure, the worship of the creature, rather than the worship of the Creator; whereas the ruling principle of Christianity is the worship of the Creator as the chief end of man, and the highest blessing for man. The great words of Christianity are Duty and Destiny. Everywhere in the world there is an intense conflict between these two conceptions of life.

In former days the principal assault was on the Christian doctrines of redemption, and upon the credibility of the Scriptures. Today the attack is shifted to another quarter. It is directed openly against the doctrines and morals and precepts of the Christian faith.

1. Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion,* page 167.

Formerly, the men who assailed Christian doctrines and attacked the credibility of the Bible were the very ones who had much to say in praise of Christ and His precepts. Only here and there was one heard of, who, as Frederick Nietzsche in his Anti-Christ, openly attacked the principles of Christian morality. But today that is what men are doing everywhere. The attack is not merely a theoretical and academic one, but something much more dangerous—the spirit and the practise of the age.

What, let us ask, are the forces and the ruling ideas which have been organized into this great drive against the Christian way of life. Undoubtedly, there is back of this movement, defined or undefined, a conception of man's nature, which makes the grand precepts of Christianity as out of place when applied to man as they would be if applied to a toad or a bird. A popular college text book in psychology commences by declaring that the first duty of the investigator is to understand the lower animals, for the only difference between man and the lower animals is one of degree. If this is so, it is a waste of time for us to talk about the Christian way or the precepts of Christ. Fortunately, voices of protest and warning are not wanting in college halls themselves. Chauncey Brewster Tinker, professor of English at Yale University, has recently said, "The disease of the world today is a loss of faith in the moral nature of man. What we have lost is a conception of the dignity of life and of the imperial position of man in nature. Instead of thinking of the

august character and destiny of man, we have been preoccupied with him as one of the highest order of primates. Man has been found to be a speaking animal. The view that he is also the son of God was an amiable, but deluded notion of our ill-informed ancestors."

Another element in the present drive against Christian standards is the resentment towards moral authority and the condemnation which Christianity brings upon certain modes of conduct. A man expressed surprise at the crowds which were flocking to listen to a preacher of showy, but shallow parts. The man with whom he was talking, a wise and venerable colored man, said, "These people do not go to hear this man preach because they want to hear the truth. They go because they want to know how to sin and be happy." If the truth were told, it is that desire, how to sin and be happy, which is the animus back of many of the assaults upon Christian doctrine and Christian ethics. This is boldly formulated in an address given some time ago before the American Association for the Advancement of Science by an ex-college professor and one of the chief columnists of the day. He says: "If the Ten Commandments are to be obeyed today, it should be only when their precepts and advice can be proved to square with the best natural and social science of the present times. One may admit the existence of immorality and crime, but scarcely sin, which is by technical definition a willful and direct affront to God—a violation of the explicitly revealed will of God. Men and science have shown it to be difficult

to prove the very existence of God, and even more of a problem to show any direct solicitude of God for our petty and ephemeral planet. Biblical criticism has revealed the fact that we can in no direct and literal sense look upon the Bible or any other existing Holy book as embodying the revealed will of God. Consequently, if we do not and cannot know by nature of the will of God in regard to human behavior, we cannot very well know when we are violating it. In other words, sin is scientifically indefinable and unknowable. Hence sin goes into the limbo of ancient superstitions, such as witchcraft and sacrifice."

That amounts to saying that the Ten Commandments are to be observed only when a man feels disposed to observe them. The fallacy is that if man had been disposed to observe them, naturally so disposed, the Ten Commandments would never have been given to man because there would have been no need of them.

In the introduction to his book, *The Rational Good,* the late Prof. L. P. Hobhouse, gives expression to the idea that Christian ethics are unpractical. Speaking of the Christian revelation, he says: "Yet with all its potency the alleged simplicity of the doctrine is a delusion. It has not been possible for men in the mass to live by it . . . for all Christian communities the law of God and of man fall asunder and the patched work compromises are so often threadbare that we are driven to wonder whether the franker paganism did not gain in honesty what it lost in idealism."[1]

1. See *Christian Ideals in Daily Life,* Belton, page 3.

Back of all this movement, too, there is an urge for what is called freedom, liberty. A century and a half ago, when men talked about liberty, or freedom, it had a political application. But today these words mean the freedom of the individual to do what he pleases. There is a resentment against Christianity for having interfered so long with the natural pleasures of mankind. Now the way to true happiness is to cast off all these restraints. Mrs. Bertrand Russell in a book advocating pre-marital and extra-marital sex relations boldly affirms this. The tragedies of disillusionment and of self-betrayal are generally overlooked when this kind of freedom is urged upon the youth of our generation. "Ye shall be as gods," is a bait which has lured many a victim ever since the day it was first successfully used in tempting mankind. At the end of the experiment those who make the experiment discover themselves to be naked. With a penetration and keenness which we associate more with the mind of St. Paul, St. Peter powerfully exposes this sham liberty and false freedom when he says, "While they promise themselves liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption, for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." (II Peter 2:19.)

In his essay, "The Crisis in Morals," Gilbert Murray thus speaks of the doctrine of self expression: "Lastly there has been the false theory: a theory which has already done a vast amount of harm in education and is still running riot in the sphere of art. I mean the worship of self expression. I will leave art aside for

the present, but in education I believe this vicious dogma is approaching its unlamented burial . . . We all start life with an extremely limited appreciation of the greatness and beauty by which we are surrounded, and also with a pretty confident opinion that a thing which does not happen to please us is not up to much. I cannot imagine an education which for me, personally, would have been more utterly damnable than to teach me to be contented with my existing beliefs and powers and just express them—to take the raw, untrained Australian boy called Gilbert Murray as the measure of the Universe and simply encourage him to go ahead. I trust, however, that this nightmare will pass."[1]

After the same manner also speaks A. E. Taylor in an address before the Anglo-Catholic Congress: "Our young men are told by persuasive voices sometimes that there is not even any real distinction between good and bad, only the irrational prejudices of individuals. Sometimes that there is a distinction, but that the law of Christ has drawn it in the wrong way, and that the future must set itself to a firm, a trans-valuation of all values, humility, meekness, gentleness, all that Christianity declares to be the fruits of the spirit are symptoms of weakness and disease. Pride, self-will, preferring himself in honor before others, these are the tempers of the strong man, these are the real virtues."[2]

1. Gilbert Murray, Harper's, January 1920.
2. See *Christian Ideals in Daily Life*, Belton, page 8.

The most ancient experiment along this line ended in a dismal failure. The man and the woman in the garden were to have their eyes opened. They did have their eyes opened; but when they were opened they saw nothing grand or glorious or mysterious, but only their own nakedness—"they knew that they were naked." They were to know good and evil. But the only good they knew was the good they had lost, and the only evil they knew was the evil they had got. Then they were to become like God; but instead of becoming like God, they left the Garden naked, sorrowing, remorseful, recriminating, and fallen. We have no reason to think that the modern experiment is going to prove any more successful. When the only commandment is my own will; when I can no longer lift up mine eyes to the hills, or to the Rock higher than I; when I can find no reason, sanction, or inspiration for human conduct other than man's desire or wish or want—in short, when we have given up and surrendered everything that we now regard as holy, will the world be free and happy? Probably not, and the reason is that true happiness is not without, but within. Man is a moral being, in a body, it is true, yet also a living soul in the image of God, and, by his very creation, linked to God. The highest happiness will depend on how man reacts and responds to that inevitable and indissoluble relationship. Never in mere gratification, never in the mere boasting that he has refused to do the things which he ought to have done, but in loving loyalty to God is the happi-

ness of man to be found. Thomas Wentworth Higginson wrote once to his son, saying: "He can think as he pleases about religion; but he has got to live with other people, and he cannot get rid of God. The world and we are all made so, and the boy who sees it clearly and lives accordingly is best off."

We have said enough, I am sure, to indicate the great importance of knowing what the Christian way is, what it has done for civilization, and the peril of departing from it for some other way. What it has meant to civilization is well put by Lowell: "The worst kind of religion is no religion at all, and these men living in ease and luxury, indulging themselves in the amusement of going without religion, may be thankful that they live in lands where the Gospel they neglect has tamed the beastliness and ferocity of the men who, but for Christianity, might long ago have eaten their carcases like the South Sea Islanders, or cut off their heads and tanned their hides like the monsters of the French Revolution. When the microscopic search of skepticism, which has hunted the heavens and sounded the seas to disprove the existence of a Creator, has turned its attention to human society, and has found a place on this planet ten miles square where a decent man can live in decency, comfort and security, supporting and educating his children, unspoiled and unpolluted; a place where age is reverenced, infancy respected, manhood respected, womanhood honoured, and human life held in due regard—when skeptics can find such a place ten miles square

on this globe, where the Gospel of Christ has not gone and cleared the way and laid the foundation and made decency and security possible, it will then be in order for the skeptic and literatti to move thither and there ventilate their views."

We speak of Christ as the Saviour of the World, which indeed He is, in the highest spiritual sense, for by His life and death He is the Saviour of the souls of men. But we must not forget that in another sense Christ may be called the Saviour of the World because He has been the Saviour of human society. "His career on earth was, even humanly speaking, the most important event that ever occurred among men, since the regeneration of society commenced only with the proclamation of the Gospel. The precise time of His advent is truly remarkable. A little earlier, His morality would not have been absolutely necessary, for the nations were still upheld by their ancient laws. A little later, the Divine Messiah would have appeared after the general wreck of society."[1]

In the program of the party which now completely dominates Germany, strange though it may seem, there is a true appraisal of what the Christian way has done for the world. In one of his outlines of policy, Herr Hitler says: "It is wrong to abuse in general terms the greatest phenomenon in human history for the mistakes and depravities of individuals. The Christian religion has raised and edified millions and millions and brought them to God by the way of suffering.

1. Chateaubriand, *Genius of Christianity*, VI, 13.

The culture of the middle ages stood up in the sign of the Cross; achievement, sacrifice, courageous faith, have their roots in Christianity. . . . It is of urgent importance to set our face against all the disruptive influences which are doing harm to our nation in the domain of art, literature, science, the stage, the moving pictures, and above all, throughout the entire press."

The invasion of non-Christian principles, or rather the abandonment of Christian principles, has been featured in the newspaper reports of state and federal investigations of the dealings and methods of some of the largest and most important financial institutions and directors of the country. Indeed, it looks as if one of the chief causes for the descent of the United States into the ditch of misery and want was the scrapping and ignoring of the Christian principles of common honesty, justice, brotherhood, and contentment.

II.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE MOVING PICTURES

One of the most dangerous and powerful attacks on the Christian way of life comes from the motion picture theater, the vast reach and influence of which is almost beyond our imagination. It is estimated that 75 million people, of whom 30 million are youth and children, attend the moving picture theaters every week. The Payne Foundation, devoted to the welfare of youth, at the instance of Dr. Lowell, President Emeritus of Harvard University, sometime ago made an investigation of the moral and social influence of the moving picture industry. These investigations reveal the following facts:

49 percent of 110 criminals examined said the moving pictures gave them the desire to carry a gun.

28 percent said the moving pictures gave them the idea of a hold-up.

17 percent of the truant and delinquent boys said the moving pictures gave them the motive to run away from home.

25 percent of 117 delinquent girls in the State Training Schools said that the moving pictures were the direct cause of their downfall.

49 percent of 252 girls in one State Training School said it was the moving pictures which gave them the wish to lead a fast life.

Father Daniel S. Lord, S.J., who wrote the Production Code adopted by the industry, analyzed 133 feature length pictures announced in THE MOTION PICTURE HERALD from January to the middle of May, 1934. Of these 133 pictures, 26 plots were built on illicit love outside marriage; 13 dealt with accomplished seduction; 12 with attempted seduction; 2 were based on rape; 1 on attempted incest; 18 of the characters lived in open adultery; 7 were planning adultery; 3 were prostitutes. All told, there were 107 major violations of sex morality and decency in 133 pictures.

In a recent communication, Dr. Harold G. Campbell, Superintendent of Schools, New York City, said: "We have long since abandoned the idea that education consists simply of instruction given and received in school. We know that children are being educated during every hour of the day, as much perhaps whilst they are out of school as while they are in school. The movies are playing a large part in this out of school education, and we who are charged with the development of their character, attitudes and habits, are vitally concerned that the part played and the influence exerted by the movies shall be helpful rather than destructive . . . We should not permit children to be uneducated or misguided by the visual instruction they receive from inferior movies outside of school. *There is little doubt in my mind that much*

of the good that the schools are doing, especially in the field of character training and the development of right social attitudes, is being undermined and thwarted by sub-standard motion pictures."[1]

The findings of such groups as the Payne Commission, and other investigations carried out by some of the most distinguished educators and leaders of the country, are of a nature to alarm every man who believes that Christian Ethics are the foundation of our national life. In any survey of anti-Christian forces the disastrous effects of low-standard moving pictures cannot be ignored. With the number enrolled in the Sunday Schools and Bible Schools of the nation sinking every year, and the number of youths patronizing all kinds of moving pictures ever on the increase, it becomes increasingly clear that in teaching and illustrating the Christian Way of life the Church has a more difficult task than it has ever had since the days of the Roman Empire, when the gospel was preached to those whose minds and imaginations had been steeped in the brutal and licentious scenes of the pagan amphitheaters.

When we turn to the literature of the day, the same tendencies are at once manifest. Indeed, some of the best sellers and most widely discussed books are nothing but word pictures, ofttimes powerfully and attractively drawn, of what, if it were depicted upon a postal card, or picture, would in every state in the Union land the author in the penitentiary. The difference is only

1. *New York Times,* June 24, 1934. (Italics our own.)

that between a word picture and a photograph or a drawing. The latter is still generally condemned and abhorred. The word picture goes everywhere and is highly acclaimed.

Christianity has a definite and unique conception of man's body and the relationships of men and women. Paganism had its conceptions and its practises, upon which Christianity, as soon as it entered the world, proclaimed bitter and truceless war. What pagan morals were one can infer from that terrible sketch drawn by St. Paul in the first chapter of the Letter to the Romans. That his sketch is not overdrawn, but underdrawn, is attested by the pagan writers themselves; Cicero, who tells us that there is an immense struggle for iniquity, and that virtue is not only rare but nowhere; and Tacitus, who, when he comes to describe Roman morals, tells us that he will take us no further than the mouth of that foul cavern, lest its deadly odors should destroy us. There is no good reason for believing that the unchecked spread of anti-Christian principles and the abandonment of Christian morals will do anything else than plunge the world back again into that abyss out of which Christianity once lifted it.

The sex appeal that is seen everywhere in literature, drama, and even in business, is certainly not a healthy symptom; for one remembers that the ancient heathen religions put that foremost in their appeal to mankind, and one by one they perished, and the kingdoms and empires in which they once flourished, perished also. Let no one imagine that the sex propaganda of the

day is not leaving its impress upon the thought and practise of our generation. An editor of a widely-read magazine which had been running a series of exceedingly frank, and, so-called, "advanced," sex discussions, advocating among other things, experimental promiscuity before marriage, became alarmed when protests came in from teachers in high schools telling him that the scholars in their schools were following this advice with the usual lamentable results in disease and immorality. In order to combat the evil already done, the editor invited a distinguished physician and scientist to state his opinion on the matter. This physician said, "that the ancient habits of mankind are for the good of the greatest number, that the theories which had been advocated would destroy happiness in marriage, and that looseness in sexual ethics would produce in men and women those qualities which make acquaintance with people a personal tragedy—shiftiness, jealousy, selfishness, callousness, coarseness, and lack of faith."

III.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

One of the most dangerous of the attacks upon the Christian Way of Life is the present assault upon the Christian idea of marriage. The home, and with the home the institution of marriage, is the central and fundamental fact in our social structure. Whatever assails the home attacks the Church, the State, and the individual. In the long run, the character of the nation depends upon the noble tradition of the home founded upon marriage between one man and one woman. In this land of ours there are 29,904,663 homes. What is happening to these homes? This is of infinitely greater importance than the subjects which are discussed in the newspapers and in the halls of our Legislatures and Congress, such as taxation, flood relief plans, development of water power, and the national political conventions soon to convene.

One who returned to America after long absence said that what struck him most was the change in the homes of America, and that the abandonment of moral training in the home was the explanation of the disregard for the rights of others and the lack of moral earnestness.

1. *What the Facts are.* The following are some of the interesting and alarming facts about marriage and divorce:

THE RATE OF INCREASE

Year	No. Divorces	No. Per 1000 Marriages
1890	33,461	62
1900	55,751	81
1920	148,815	131
1928	195,939	162
1929	201,468	163
1930	191,591	170
1931	183,664	173
1932	160,338	163
1933	165,000	150
1934	204,000	157
1935	218,000	164
1936	236,000	172
1937	250,000	175

The above table shows that in ten years, 1928-1937, 2,006,000 divorces have been granted. This means more than 4,000,000 divorced persons in the last ten years! Thus it will be seen that the total divorced population of the United States runs into many millions.

The number of children involved in these divorces averages almost two per divorce. This means about four million children whose homes have been broken in the United States in ten years.

The number of divorces per one thousand marriages among the nations is as follows:

Belgium and France	40
Switzerland	50
Germany and Denmark	60
Japan	92
United States	175[1]

2. *Other Startling Facts.* Between 1890 and 1900 the population increased in the United States 20%, while the divorces increased 66%. It is estimated by a well known statistician that by 1965 there will be more divorces than marriages. One of the saddest aspects of this whole record, indeed, the most serious aspect of it, is the great host of children, hundreds of thousands, who come out of these broken homes. It has been estimated that about 50% of those who appear in the courts where juvenile crime is judged, come from broken homes.

3. *The Chief Causes.* The chief causes alleged in court are, according to a recent survey, as follows:

Cruelty	42.7%
Desertion	26
Adultery	7.4
Neglect to Provide	4.1
Drunkenness	1.6
Combinations of Causes	8
All other Causes	8.2

The number of cases where adultery was the chief

1. The total number of divorces for Great Britain for 1936 was 4,699; for Japan in 1935, the total number of divorces was 48,528.

cause is undoubtedly higher than the percentage noted above, as in many instances some other cause will be named to avoid scandal. On the other hand, the number of genuine desertions is probably much less, as there is much conspiracy and collusion in this matter. Cruelty, it is now well known, covers a vast territory, from petty insults and mental incompatibility to physical violence and brutality.

Divorce is now competing with death as a dissolver of marriages in the United States of America. One out of every six marriages ends in the divorce courts. There are some who view this increase in divorce with satisfaction. Looking upon marriage as a purely civil contract, they rejoice in those changes in the law which make it easy for man or woman to be delivered from the obligations of a contract which has become irksome. These persons hail the prevalence of divorce as one of the signs of the emancipation of the human mind from the fetters of ignorance, and superstition, and prejudice.

But however it may appear from the purely theoretical standpoint of human rights and happiness, the practical facts of history do not permit a feeling of jubilation over the spread of divorce. It is easy to demonstrate from history that the increase in divorce, the thawing of family morality, and the breakdown of the sanctity of the home, have been the heralds of national decline and decay. This is the lesson of the past, whether we go to little Judea or mighty Rome. As to Rome, the significance of divorce is summed up by Gibbon in his 44th chapter, where he says, "When

the Roman matrons became the equal and voluntary companions of their lords, a new jurisprudence was established, that marriage like other partnerships, might be dissolved by the abdication of one of the associates. In three centuries of prosperity and corruption, this principle was enlarged to frequent practice and pernicious abuse. Passion, interest, or caprice, suggested daily motives for the dissolution of marriage; a word, a sign, a letter, the mandate of a freeman, declared the separation; the most tender of human connections was degraded to a transient society of profit or pleasure."[1] If therefore, there are those who are rejoicing over the prevalence of divorce, they are rejoicing in the face of the facts of history.

With the home crumbling before our eyes, and the very foundations of our social structure being undermined and destroyed, all favorable trade reports, all rejoicing in returning economic prosperity and all self-congratulation upon our vast educational system are like the sound of cheerful music as the funeral procession winds its way to the grave. "I will dig thy grave because thou art vile," was the judgment by the prophet of God upon corrupt Nineveh, amid whose dismal heaps today the wild beasts howl. That is the true epitaph of all the nations and civilizations of the past. Much as we love our republic, let us not deceive ourselves into imagining that there are in the American nation elements of perpetuity which guarantee its eternal preservation regardless of the violation of the moral

1. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

law.

On many of the social questions Jesus was strangely non-committal; but on the subject of divorce His attitude was quite the reverse. Some of the most explicit legislation and teaching in the Gospels is that of Christ on marriage and divorce. His principal utterance on the subject was given to the Pharisees who came to Him one day and said, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?"

These Pharisees cared little about the opinion of Christ, and less about divorce. The object of their question was probably two-fold: first, to draw from Christ a saying which would be in disagreement with Moses and the Old Testament; and second, to make Him say something which could be construed as a condemnation of the then ruler of their country, Herod Antipas. John the Baptist's utterance on the scandalous union of Herod with his brother Philip's wife had cost him his head. The Pharisees would not have been sorry to see Jesus suffer a like fate.

In answer to their question Jesus said, "What did Moses command you?" They answered, "Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away." To this Jesus replied: "For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of the creation, male and female made he them. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. . . . What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (Mark 10:2-9;

Matt. 19:3-9 A.R.V.)

Here, first of all, we have the declaration of our Lord that monogamy, one man living with one woman, is the divine and original plan for marriage. In the beginning God created man, male and female; their mutual union was natural and inevitable. There was no plan in the beginning for divorce. But Jesus grants that since the beginning of the race, the sins and passions of mankind have resulted in the corruption of marriage, and in legislation which dealt with such irregularities. He summons men back to the original plan of God, declaring, "From the beginning it was not so;" that is, that there should be any dissolution of marriage.

In this general way Christ answered the question of the Pharisees about divorce. But he answered it also in a more specific way. In his account of this interview, St. Mark tells us that afterwards, "in the house his disciples asked him again of the matter." Then Jesus answered, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her; and if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

This same utterance is found in St. Luke's Gospel 16:18, perhaps spoken on a different occasion. We find it also in St. Matthew's Gospel, 5:31-32. Here it reads, and it is a part of the sermon on the Mount, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, . . . saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth

adultery." We have thus four passages in which Christ speaks his mind on the subject of divorce.

In the two utterances of Christ on the subject in Matt. 5:31-32, and Matt. 19:3-9, there is a striking difference between his utterances as recorded by St. Luke and St. Mark. In both passages in St. Matthew's Gospel there is an excepting clause, making Christ say, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, *except it be for fornication,* and shall marry another, committeth adultery." In the passages in Mark and Luke there is no excepting clause, and Christ declares, without exception, that to put away one's wife and marry another, or for the wife to put away her husband and marry another, is to commit adultery. How shall we explain this apparent discrepancy?

The Roman Catholic Church, which allows no ground for divorce, takes as its authority the passages in St. Mark and St. Luke, where divorce, and remarriage of divorced persons, is declared to be adultery. Her theologians, however, must face the difficulty of the excepting clause, sexual infidelity, as recorded in the two passages of St. Matthew's Gospel. Some have held that the excepting clause in Matthew is not genuine, and that in some way it crept into the text of the first Gospel as a concession to the custom of the day and the weakness of human nature. But the manuscript authority for the excepting clause in Matthew is just as trustworthy as that for the passage recorded in St. Mark.

The Protestant Churches solve the difficulty, not by throwing out the excepting clause in Matthew's Gospel, and thus breaking down the authority of the text

in the New Testament, and opening the way for the rejection of almost any saying of Christ that the reader does not like, but by the assumption that what is explicit in Matthew is implicit in Mark and Luke; that is, that Mark and Luke, in their report of the words of Jesus, take for granted the exception in the case of adultery and do not think it necessary to state it.

4. *The Teaching of St. Paul.* In I Corinthians, 7: 10-15, St. Paul says, without any reservation, that there can be no divorce, and he gives his opinion as that of Christ: "But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord, That the wife do not depart from her husband, and that the husband leave not his wife." (A.R.V.) Likewise, he says in Romans 7:2: "The woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth. . . . So then, if while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress." (A.R.V.) Here, as in the teachings of Christ, divorce is forbidden, without any reservation, and those who are parties to it are guilty of adultery.

But in I Corinthians 7:14, 15, where he deals with the duties of a Christian wife or husband who is married to a pagan, Paul gives it as his opinion that the Christian partner is not to divorce or desert the pagan, "But," he adds, "if the unbelieving depart, let him depart, A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases."

5. *The Common Protestant Practice.* The Protestant Churches, as a rule, recognize adultery, and de-

sertion such as cannot be mended by civil or ecclesiastical courts, as Scriptural ground for divorce, and permit the remarriage of the innocent party. It must be confessed, however, that while many ministers of the Protestant Church will not marry a divorced person beyond these grounds, a great many do. Indeed, it would seem that no divorce is too scandalous or too un-Scriptural to prevent those seeking re-marriage from finding some Protestant minister who will marry them. The particular abuse in the case of desertion is that a large percentage of the divorces granted in our courts are on the ground of desertion, and in a great many of these cases the so-called "desertion" is no more genuine and bona fide than the so-called "cruelty" which so often is entered in the records of the court.

Many Protestant ministers will not marry any but the innocent party where the divorce has been granted on the ground of adultery, and not a few will not marry *any* divorced persons, because of their doubt as to whether or not the teachings of Christ permit them to do so. But taking even the widest interpretation of the New Testament teaching, if all ministers would not marry beyond the so-called Scriptural grounds, adultery and desertion, the ghastly total of annual divorces would be greatly diminished, and the attitude of the church on this subject would have a most wholesome effect upon all those who are in the marriage relationship.

When we consider the reach and play of all those agencies which have lent themselves to the anti-Chris-

tian movement, and the power and sway of the press of the land, the forces in the present conflict do indeed seem altogether unequal. In time of flood the waters will gather into the basin of a great dam. At first the concrete walls seem strong enough to hold the waters and resist their silent but mighty pressure. But, as has frequently happened, slowly, imperceptibly, the retaining wall is weakened, until one day it gives way, and with a rush and roar the damned up waters rush forth to spread devastation and ruin. Year after year the waters in our social and religious structure have been accumulating. Literature, drama, newspapers, picture theaters, day and night have been pouring in their hostile flood. One wonders now to what extent the retaining wall of our Christian institutions and our moral conventions has been weakened. Will it be able to stand the strain, and when it gives way, if it does give way, then what will the result be? History, the experience of the past, would seem to afford but one answer. In the closing chapter of his book, "Modern Democracies," in which he summed up the observation of a lifetime, James Bryce wrote: "The question of the permanence of democracy resolves itself into the question of whether mankind is growing in wisdom and virtue, and with that comes the question of what Religion will be in the future, since it has been for the finer and more sensitive spirits the motive power behind Morality. Governments that have ruled by Force and Fear have been able to live without moral sanctions, or to make their subjects believe that those

sanctions consecrated them, but no free government has ever yet so lived and thriven, for it is by a reverence of the Powers Unseen and Eternal which impose those sanctions, that the powers of evil, however imperfectly, have been kept at bay and the fabric of society held together."[1]

No man can unlock the future. The future belongs to God. Duty belongs to man. Whether the wall of our religious institutions and our moral customs proves strong enough to hold back the flood which now beats and swirls against it, or whether that wall is destined to go out and so release upon the nation a flood of disaster, such as it has never seen before, the present day is one of tremendous invitation and solemn opportunity for him who believes in the principles of Christian civilization, and that the way of happiness for mankind is the way that Christ and His Apostles once taught the world to take. This is the day for knight errants to go forth, their shield unstained, and believing with all the enthusiasm of which the heart is capable, that Christianity is the grandest, purest, and noblest thing that ever came into the world. And should the deluge come, as many now think it will, then it will be the office and the calling of those who know and love the truth to point the world back again to the only way of safety and of peace. As Disraeli said so eloquently at Oxford concerning that great deluge, the French Revolution: "When the turbulence was over, when the waters had subsided, the sacred

1. James Bryce, *Modern Democracies,* part III, ch. 80.

heights of Sinai and of Calvary were again revealed, and amidst the wreck of thrones, extinct nations and abolished laws, mankind, tried by so many sorrows, purified by so much suffering, and wise with such unprecedented experience, bowed again before the divine truths that Omnipotence had entrusted to the custody and promulgation of a chosen people."

Part Three

THE CHRISTIAN ACT

I.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST THE GREATEST OF ALL THEMES

Some years ago, a Chinese who had been converted, outwardly, to Christianity, but who apostatized from the Christian faith and went back into idolatry, in an article, "I am a Pagan," said that he had abandoned Christianity because he had abandoned the idea of Redemption. This Chinese was at least honest and logical. He knew that Christianity, no matter how its great central truth is ignored, denied, or dismissed today, is primarily a religion of Redemption from sin. How that Redemption is accomplished is what we mean by the Christian Act.

The late President Calvin Coolidge, in the reminiscences of his early life, published sometime before his death, told of his college days at Amherst and spoke with gratitude of the professor of philosophy, Dr. Charles Edward Garman, and the great themes which he discussed with his students. Another Amherst graduate, the headmaster of Andover, tells how the lectures of Dr. Garman reached their peak when he came to speak of the Atonement made by Christ on the Cross. The most important ball games of the year would be forgotten, and the noon meal was re-

garded only as an opportunity to continue a discussion of the great subject of Garman's lecture, the Atonement. When the closing bell in the class rang, no one would stir, and the class continued sometimes for a half hour longer.

This will strike the college student of today as very remarkable. But why should it be thought a strange thing, that deep interest which those students at Amherst showed in the death of Christ on Calvary? That death is the Eternal Act and the Eternal Fact of Christian history. Nothing comparable to it in grandeur, pathos, beauty and power can come into the mind of man. No subject is so worthy of our interest and attention as this great theme, God's Eternal Act upon the Cross. Even the angels we are told, desire to look into it.

The ancient philosophers used to tell of a mountain of loadstone, the magnetic properties of which were so powerful, that all objects which came near the mountain were drawn to its foot, and even ships afar off on the sea, passing the mountain, had nails drawn from their timbers and were sunk on the rocks. The magnet of Christianity is the Cross. The One Who died upon it said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me;" and wherever men have been truly drawn to Christ as He is offered to us in the Scriptures they have been drawn to Him by the Cross.

Going once into a Waldensian Church in Italy, a traveler expressed surprise to the minister at seeing a large Cross over the pulpit of the historic Protestant

Church of Italy. This was the minister's explanation, "We must have a Cross over the Church in order to let the people know that this is a Christian Church." The Cross, not as a piece of architecture, but as a divine fact and truth is the distinguishing thing about the Christian religion. If it is left out, Christianity is gone. The Cross is not only a prominent fact of the Gospel, not merely a part of the Gospel, and not *a* Gospel; but *the* Gospel, and without it there is no Gospel. In the words of Turretin, one of the great writers on the Cross: "The Cross and its doctrine, the Atonement, is the chief part of our salvation, the anchor of faith, the refuge of hope. So long as this doctrine is maintained in its integrity, Christianity itself and the peace and blessedness of all who believe in Christ are beyond the reach of danger. But if it is rejected, or in any way impaired, the whole structure of the Christian faith must sink into decay and ruin."

In the introduction to a book published sometime before his death, Sir Conan Doyle complained that the Church had made too much of the death of Christ and not enough of the life of Christ. This is a sentiment which finds a very wide response today, and the popular pulpit and theological emphasis has swung far away from the Cross. The Cross as a sign and a name is not dismissed; but it is explained not as a great Act of God, but an act of man only, and one which sets before us the highest example, the most noble obedience to the will of God, the strongest appeal to man to repent, the fountain of good will. All this, however good and

beautiful it may be, is very clearly not the Cross of Christ as it is revealed in the Scriptures and proclaimed in the Gospel.

The charge of Conan Doyle that the Church over emphasizes the death of Christ is hardly true today. Indeed, one could wish that the Church were more guilty of the charge. It is not possible to over emphasize the Cross. In a recent biography of Daniel Webster, of the 863 pages which deal with the career of the great statesman and orator, just five are devoted to the story of his death. In Nicolay and Hay's *Life of Lincoln* there are 5,000 pages, and just 25 are devoted to the dramatic story of his assassination and death. This is the rule with all biographies. The death of the hero is a mere incident at the end of the book. But when we come to the four biographies of Jesus, or the Four Gospels, we are confronted with an extraordinary fact. One third of Matthew, one third of Mark, and one fourth of Luke are devoted to the death of Jesus; and one half of the Fourth Gospel, John, is devoted to the last twenty-four hours of the life of Jesus. The Cross, therefore, is the preeminent fact of the Gospels; and it is only in keeping with that preeminence that St. Paul said to the Corinthians, what was true of his preaching everywhere, "I delivered unto you *first* of all," not merely in the chronological sense, or that they were first to hear it, but first in importance, "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." If, then, the Church has made a mistake in giving preeminence to the death of Christ, it is the mistake of the Gospels,

the mistake of Peter, and James, and John; and, we may say, the mistake of Christ Himself. Paul was speaking not only for himself, but for the true Church and the true believer everywhere, when he said, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In the theology of our day the dominant note is the Incarnation. We are told that the Church has centered its thought too much on the death of Christ and not enough upon his life, the Incarnation. The New Testament does indeed emphasize and exalt the Incarnation, but always an incarnation for the purpose of atonement. "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, to redeem them that were under the law." (Gal. 4:4.) "This is a faithful saying, . . . that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (I Tim. 1:15.) "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." (II Cor. 1:15.) "Let the Incarnation be preached and exalted; but any Incarnation that stops short of Calvary, that was for any purpose save the forgiveness of sin, is an Incarnation of which the New Testament knows absolutely nothing.

One hardly knows where to commence when one launches out upon this ocean of truth, the death of Christ for mankind. Here are two wills. The one was filed in May, 1564, at Geneva, Switzerland. The testator was a scholar and minister of Christ whose property amounted to $32.00, a few books, and a few old chairs. In this will the testator says:

"With my whole soul, I embrace the mercy which he has exercised to me through Jesus Christ, atoning for

my sins by the merits of His death and passion, that in this way He might satisfy for all my crimes and faults, and blot them from His remembrance. I testify also and declare that I suppliantly beg of Him that he may be pleased so to wash and purify me in the blood which my sovereign Redeemer has shed for the sins of the human race, that under his shadow I may be able to stand at the Judgment Seat."

The second excerpt is from the will of a man who died at the beginning of the twentieth century, and who, at the time of his death, was probably the richest man in America. The first paragraph of his will is as follows:

"I commit my soul into the hands of my Saviour in full confidence that having redeemed it and washed it in his most precious blood, He will present it faultless before the throne of my heavenly Father, and I entreat my children to maintain and defend at any cost of personal sacrifice the blessed doctrine of the complete Atonement for sin through the blood of Jesus Christ once offered, and through that alone."

These two wills were made by men differing in race —one a Frenchman, the other an American; one living in the sixteenth century, the other in the twentieth century; one a scholar, a minister and a reformer; the other a banker and financier; one a poor man, the other a rich man; yet alike in the confidence which the testa-

tors repose in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. John Calvin did not plead his poverty, and J. P. Morgan did not plead his riches. Both put their trust in the death of Christ on the Cross.

How shall we speak of the Cross, this vast and wonderful theme into which, said St. Peter, "the angels desire to look?" One of the finest things on the Atonement is what Young says of it in his *Night Thoughts.*

> "Heaven's inexhaustible exhausted fund,
> Though curious to compute,
> Archangels failed to cast the mighty sum."

There is a depth in the Cross which is beyond that of even an archangel to fathom. The Cross is God's own mystery. All that we can do is to touch the outermost hem of its crimson garment. The cherubim cover the rest with their wings. We are glad that the Cross in its length and breadth and depth and height is beyond the compass of our mind, for if we could compass it with our mind, it would not be deep enough for the needs of our soul.

Yet it is possible to overstate the mystery of the Cross. What is always emphasized in the New Testament concerning this great act of God is not its mystery, but its power and its grace. An unexplained fact means nothing; and Christ did not send His disciples into the world to preach a message which no one could understand. It is, indeed, true that the angels desire to look into the Cross; and, as Young said, "though curious to

compute, failed to cast the mighty sum." But this is where man, although a little lower than the angels, outranks them; for the great Act on the Cross was done, not for the sake of angels, but for the sake of man, a sinner. Therefore, in a practical sense, man can know far more about the Cross than even the mightiest of the archangels who desire to look into it, but who veil their faces before it, crying, "Holy! Holy! Holy!"

II.

THE ETERNAL ACT

In the first place the Cross is the Eternal Act of God. In point of time, Christ was crucified when the wretched Tiberius was emporer of Rome and Pontius Pilate Procurator of Judea. That time element is embodied in the Apostles' Creed, "He suffered under Pontius Pilate." But the Cross has a significance which outranges all time. It is a truth and an act which stretches from eternity to eternity. Christ was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," (Rev. 13:8) and as an act of God the Cross is as timeless as God Himself. In the Old Testament we see the unfolding of the drama of redemption. One of the most heartening and encouraging things in recent Christian history has been the magnificent stand of evangelical Christians in Germany against the effort of the Nazi Christians to abandon the Old Testament and thus throw Christianity off its historic base. Their heroic testimony to the Old Testament Scriptures as the Word of God, the Bible that Paul used, and Peter and Stephen and Jesus, and the preparation and foundation of the New Testament, has stirred the hearts of believing men and women throughout the world. The

Old Testament is an arrow which points straight to Christ. Peter said that the prophets testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Every sacrifice offered in tabernacle or temple looked forward to the sacrifice of the divine Victim on Calvary. From Sinai, where the Law was given, to Calvary, where the Law was satisfied and the gates of mercy opened for sinners, there runs a highway over which pass the feet of patriarchs, prophets, psalmists and angels.

"The Cross of Christ was not an after-thought of God when the world had gone all wrong. From the beginning he determined to redeem the world by His own suffering. 'There was a cross planted in the heart of God before our Saviour's Cross was set up on Calvary's hill.' Calvary is the climax and consummation of the vast divine purpose of redemption through love. And this vicarious suffering is the supreme law of the universe according to the eternal plan of God."[1]

The Cross is an Eternal Fact also when we look forward. It is the symbol of Christ's great victory, when the Kingdoms of this world shall have become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. The last Book in the Bible, the Apocalypse, is the Book of the future; and in that Book the Lamb of God, or the Cross, is the central and dominating figure, so much so, that one might call the Apocalypse, the Book of the Lamb. Its judgments are the judgments or the wrath of the Lamb. The joys of the redeemed are those which

1. F. W. Aveling, *Credo,* p. 138, James Clark and Co., London.

they receive from the Lamb, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto fountains of living waters. The Lamb standing as He had been slain breaks the seals on the Seven-sealed Book of human destiny, and all the music of heaven is to the Lamb that was slain.

III.

THE CROSS IS THE RECONCILING ACT

The Cross is a Divine Act done in relationship to the Sin of man. In the Boston Library there is a great mural painting, "Christianity and Judaism" by Sargent. At one end are the Law and the Prophets in majestic splendor and noble array, and at the other is the dogma of Redemption. Surmounting all are three colossal figures of the Trinity. On the Cross hangs the Son of God, with Adam and Eve, emblematic of humanity, kneeling on either side and bound by what seems to be either cloud or purple banner to the body of Christ. Thus, the artist has expressed the idea that the Cross was a divine act which has a direct and peculiar effect upon man. We shall never understand the Cross if we think of it merely as an incidental Act of man done against Christ and not an Act of God done through Christ for mankind. If the Cross was not the consummation of an eternal, divine plan, then it was a defeat instead of a victory, and a debacle instead of a triumph.

The Cross, then, must be related to the fact of sin. The Bible has little to say about sin in a philosophical or speculative sense; that is, as to how or why sin came into the world, or why God permits it, but shows

us God in action, taking measures against sin. The Cross is God's war upon sin. The Cross represents the justice of God. But if there is no sin, then the Cross does not express the justice of God or His mind against sin. The Cross expresses the love and the goodness of God. But unless it is related to man's necessity; that is, man's sin, then the death of Christ in no way reveals the goodness and the love of God; and it would be an absurdity to say that God commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

A chief difficulty which confronts us when we come to consider the Atonement of Christ for our sins on the Cross is to discriminate between a sacrificial death that helps, or does good to, another, and a sacrificial death that atones for sin. In order to make clear the difference, let us cite this incident of heroic and noble sacrifice for others.

On Boston Common stands one of the finest monuments in all the world, the monument to Colonel Robert Shaw and the colored soldiers of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment. Colonel Shaw, after gallant service in the 74th Regiment of New York and the 2nd Massachusetts, received a commission as Colonel of the 54th Massachusetts, the first regiment of colored troops raised in Massachusetts. Because of the intense feeling in the Southern Army towards colored troops, a command in a colored regiment was the most dangerous in the service. At the age of 27 Shaw fell at the head of his troops when leading a charge in an unsuccessful assault against Fort Wagner, S. C., July, 1863. Both

the young commander and the soldiers under him put on immortality on that July evening. Thinking to dishonor him, but in reality only showing him unusual distinction, the Confederates threw his body into a ditch, proclaiming that his body had been buried in a pit, "under a heap of his niggers."

The fine monument on Boston Common shows Shaw on horseback at the head of his regiment, who press eagerly forward at his side. There is a noble exaltation of soul in the face of the young Colonel and the light of devotion in the black faces of the troops who loved him. Rather than bronze and stone, what one seems to see is a regiment of soldiers marching into battle, so life-like and life-filled is the work of the artist. Underneath are these words:

"Right in the van in the red ramparts slippery swell,
With heart that beat a charge he fell
Forward, as fits a man.
But the high soul burns on to light men's feet
Whose death for noble ends makes dying sweet."

Here was indeed a death for "noble ends," ends of humanity, justice and truth. His death, together with the half million others in the Northern armies, had its part in the preservation of the Union, the emancipation of the slave, and the maintenance of free government. It serves too as an inspiration and incentive to high living and noble self-forgetting to the young men of Massachusetts who today look upon it. "The high soul

burns on to light men's feet."

Here, in one of its most beautiful aspects and most heroic episodes, you have a sacrificial death on the part of man for man. Too often when men think, and when men preach, about the Cross, it is a death like that which they have in mind. But such a death, noble though it be, bears no relationship to, and is altogether remote from, the death of Christ. There is really no death with which you can compare the death of Christ, for His was a death which had its effect upon man the sinner.

The question, How does God forgive sin? assumes the fact of sin, and that sin is of a nature as to require either punishment or forgiveness; and this, in turn, assumes that there is a God to whom man is accountable, and against whose will and law man can and does sin. What is sin? Some of the things the reality of which man feels most intensely do not require a definition. However, it may help us in seeking an answer to our great question if we set before ourselves one of the shortest and best definitions of sin ever made, which is, "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God." Man is placed in a world ruled by moral law, the author of which is God. Sin is the breaking of one of those laws, and a sinner, therefore, in the simplest and plainest words, is a law-breaker. The teaching of the Scriptures is that all men everywhere are law-breakers, and that in word, thought, and deed, they daily break the holy law of God. To break the law of God is not merely to transgress against one

of His commandments, but to fail to live up to the requirements of God's law. And what is this requirement? Nothing less than perfection: "Be ye perfect," is the law of God. If under the whole heaven you could discover a man who claimed that he had never broken one of the laws of God, still, you would not be able to find a man in his right mind who would claim that he had perfectly kept the law of God, and that his life was in absolute conformity with the will of God.

According to the Scriptures and the Gospel, the explanation of this sad and universal condition of human nature is that all men inherit a nature which has been invaded and corrupted by sin. This is what is meant by the now almost forgotten word, "original sin." We need not take fright at such a phrase as that, for it comes as near to the truth as any human expression can come. It is a statement of a plain and irrefragable fact, that men are born with natures inclined towards evil. Generation after generation, race after race, under the most unfavorable auspices and surroundings, in the midst of barbarian darkness, or under the influence of Christian institutions or civilization, produce the same sad traits, and display the same dark shadow, which is as universal as human nature and as eternal as human history. In our human thought we make a considerable distinction between a potential and an actual transgressor; that is, for example, between a man who might steal and a man who is a thief, between a man who might lie and the man who is a liar, between the man who might commit adultery and the man who is an

adulterer. But no man commits the sins just mentioned without having first of all a sinful nature. The root had to be there before the evil fruit could grow. And so it is that the great difference which men make between potential and actual transgression does not seem to lie in the mind of God. The possibilities of all that any man has done exist in you and in me.

Sin is not a surface fact, easily deleted or removed, but an internal fact. As the prophet Jeremiah said so long ago, "Your sin is written with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond; it is graven upon the table of their heart." In the words of Chrysostom, "There is only one calamity—sin." The most amazing and convincing testimony to the fact of sin in human nature is not the expression of contrition and remorse and regret on the part of desperate and notorious sinners, but the confession of the noblest and the saintliest lives, how men who came the nearest to God thought the least of their own hearts, and, like St. Paul, described themselves as "the chief of sinners."

What, then, of sin? What of this great idea which lies back of the Scriptures and is the presupposition of the Gospel and of religion, and of all altars and temples, this conviction that there is something wrong in the relationship between man and God, and that man himself is unable to effect a readjustment and a reconciliation? Are we to believe now, as one would gather from the literature of the day, and from much of the popular teaching of the day, that this idea of sin which so gripped the intellect and conscience of past

generations, and was, in a way, the inspirer of Christian civilization, is now only an immense delusion, and to be cast into the limbo of outworn and outmoded conceptions? Unfortunately, the facts of life do not square with this abandonment of the idea of sin. Some years ago, a popular writer said, "The preachers must stop dealing with that theological bromide, sin." Would that it were only a theological bromide! But even if the preachers were to stop proclaiming it, the Bible, the world, the theater, human nature, conscience, and Christ Himself would continue to preach it.

In his powerful tale, *The Black Veil,* Nathaniel Hawthorne tells a sad truth about human nature. The congregation had assembled in the New England church to greet their new minister. What was their amazement when their pastor appeared in the pulpit veiled in black. Some conjectured that his face was marred with some disease, the ravages of which he would thus hide from his people; and others that he was bearing a burden of recent bereavement; and others that it was a token of penitence for sin. Thus passed the weeks, the months and the years of a long pastorate, and never once was the black veil lifted from the countenance of the minister. At length, his summons came, and he lay dying on his bed. A neighboring minister had come in to pray with him, and before leaving him, besought him to lift the veil from his face that its mystery might not go down with him into the grave. At that the dying man raised himself in his bed and said: "Why do you tremble at me alone? Tremble

also at each other. Have men avoided me, and women shown no pity, and children screamed and fled only for my black veil? What, but the mystery which it so obscurely typifies, has made this piece of crepe so awful? When the friend shows his inmost heart to his friend, the lover to his best beloved, when man does not vainly shrink from the eye of his Creator, loathsomely treasuring up the secret of his sin; then deem me a monster for the symbol beneath which I have lived and die! I look around me, and, lo, on every visage a black veil."

In order to realize that he needs to be reconciled to God, man will have no occasion to search beyond the area of his own heart. But when we do look upon the world about us, what a world it is! Read the newspapers of any city for a single day, and then say whether or not the world needs to be reconciled to God. All our boasted refinement and cultivation are but a gold-embroidered cloth which conceals a body full of wounds and bruises and putrifying sores. Yet this lost, sinning world is God's world. An old Welsh poem tells how the Creator once held a review of the heavenly bodies. One by one, sun, moon, stars, and all the host of heaven passed by, and as they passed, their august Maker greeted them with a smile. But when the earth passed, God blushed! Yes, it matters not how fair the beginning of life, or how unclouded its early sky, every man comes at length within that shadow which is as universal as human nature and as eternal as human history, the deep, deep, shadow of sin.

How does God forgive sin? That is the greatest question which can engage the mind of man. So far as we can tell, it is the greatest question which has engaged the mind of God. The interest of man in this question has been proven by the countless altars which he has built and the sacrifices which he has offered that his sins might be forgiven. The interest of God is proven by the fact that in the revelation which we have of God's mind and will for man, the one great theme, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, is the forgiveness of sin.

Christianity is the proclamation of the fact of the forgiveness of sin and the ground upon which sin is forgiven. To answer our question, How does God forgive sin? is to proclaim the Gospel, for that, and nothing else, is the Gospel. In the words of the French writer, Vinet, "We must not say with many other truths there is this one truth in the Bible: nor even, This truth is the most important in the Gospel. Rather we must say, This truth is the Gospel itself, and all the surplus Gospel, if I may so speak, is either its expression or translation or application."

Because this truth of the forgiveness of sin is not a part of Christianity, but Christianity, not one section of the Gospel, but *the* Gospel which takes in all else, the discussion of the question which we have set before us—How does God forgive sin? is the most profitable and practical religious exercise in which we can engage; for in the consideration of the great answer which God has given us in Christ, we are compelled to contemplate

such great truths as God, the soul, sin, forgiveness, death, judgment and life to come. Whatever else may or may not be of immediate and practical value for a man's soul, this certainly is. "I believe that the root of almost every schism and heresy from which the Christian Church has ever suffered, has been the effort of men to earn, rather than to receive, their salvation; and that the reason that preaching is so commonly ineffectual is, that it calls on men oftener to work for God, than to behold God working for them."[1]

Since God and sin face one another, what is to be done? Suppose we say that God shall merely ignore or disregard sin. That would be equivalent to saying that there is no God, for a God who did that would not be God. Suppose then God should freely forgive sin. God does FREELY forgive sin; but he forgives it in His own way, and that is, through reconciliation. It is one thing to say that you believe in forgiveness of sin, another thing to say that you believe in the forgiveness of sin in God's way; that is, through Atonement and Reconciliation. The celebrated German theologian, Dorner, when speaking on this subject, would pause in the midst of his lecture, and after a death-like silence, would say, "the love which gives itself utterly and absolutely away without respect to anything, even to character, is the love, not of God, but of a harlot." Suppose, then, that God, instead of ignoring sin or forgiving it without satisfaction, should everywhere inflict the full penalty? God does not do that either, for God is not

1. Ruskin, *Crown of Wild Olives.*

only inexorable justice, but mercy and love. How, then, could God deal with this problem? As Milton said of man and his condition, "Die he must, or justice must."

There is a legend of two knights who fell into a dispute over the composition of a shield which they saw flashing before a pavilion on a distant field. One declared that the shield was of gold, and the other vehemently asserted that the shield was of silver. There was no occasion for a quarrel. Both were right, for each man was looking on a different side of the shield. The Cross is an expression of both the justice and the love of God.

The principal New Testament thought upon the death of Christ is not that He died to keep man from sinning, although that is involved in it, but that He died to save men from the consequence of their sins. We naturally recoil from such an universal indictment. It takes an immense amount of humility to submit to the teaching that all men not only have sinned, but as such are under condemnation. But that is what the death of Christ plainly teaches. "I thus judge," said the apostle, "that if Christ died for all, then had all died." You may doubt that He lived or died at all; but if He did live, and if He did die, and if He did die for all, in the place of all, then were all under the penalty of death. The death of Christ is thus an exhibition of what God thinks of sin—the Cross condemns all men.

It is true that God has revealed His mind toward sin in other ways. He wrote His law upon the tablets of

man's heart, so that men are a law unto themselves, their own conscience bearing witness and their own thoughts the while accusing them or else excusing them. (Romans 2:14) He gave His law to His people Israel with the severest penalties attached to it; He gave mighty demonstrations of His righteous indignation, drowning the earth in a flood because all flesh was corrupt before God, consuming the cities of the plain, smiting the first-born of Egypt, driving out the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, sending His chosen people into captivtity and exile, yet overthrowing their despots and tyrants, making of their grand capitals a waste and a desolation, and of their empires only a vague recollection; in pestilence and in famine, in crashing providences, in the sting of conscience and the whips and scorpions of remorse, in minds that have reeled and bodies that have rotted because of sin, in the wide and universal fact of death—in all these ways God has revealed His mind towards sin and has shown Himself to be that God Who passed before Moses in the mount and said, "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, . . . keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." But the supreme and awful exhibition of the law of God, of the mind of God towards sin, was the death of the Only Begotten Son upon the Cross.

In dealing with sin God must remain just. The Judge of all earth must do right. We have seen that man is a transgressor, that he has broken the law of God. This involves man in serious consequences, for

in a world of law the breaking of the law must be punished. If laws could be broken with impunity, then it would be a world not of law, but of anarchy. God, as the author of the moral law, must uphold that law.

There must be no thought of God overlooking sin, or forgiving sin in some way which will do violence to His own holy law against sin. For several generations the Edinburgh Review has carried on its cover the Latin epigram—"The Judge is condemned when the guilty is acquitted." That sometimes happens in human courts, but it never happens in the Divine Court. If man is justified, or, to put it in plain present day English, "acquitted," found "not guilty," it is in strict harmony with the law of right, of justice. How, then, shall mortal man be just with God? Man is a sinner. The penalty upon sin as announced by God is death, eternal death, spiritual death, and God will by no means clear the guilty.

Here, then, is the great problem of sin and its forgiveness. How can God forgive sin, pardon and restore the sinner, and yet at the same time uphold the majesty of his law and visit sin with the punishment which it deserves? To human knowledge, and even to human imagination, although not to human desire, such a thing is absolutely impossible. The glory of the Gospel, the glory of the mystery of Christianity, is that God has found a way whereby He can both punish sin and forgive it, whereby He can remain inflexibly just, the upholder of the laws of His world and yet the justifier, the pardoner of all those who believe in Jesus.

The universal punishment of sin, had that been the solution would have occasioned no question as to the "how or why" of it. If that had been the plan of God, terrible though it would have been in its consequences for the human race, it would have involved no mystery. But when we come to say that God punishes sin, gives the satisfaction to the moral world, to Himself, that the broken law requires, and yet, at the same time, restores, cleanses, pardons, acquits the transgressor—there you have something at which the mind of man would never have arrived, and into which we are told even the pure and unfallen intelligences of Heaven, the angels themselves, desire to look. When we attempt to answer the question How does God forgive sin? we are not endeavoring to lift the veil which God has hung before this greatest of all mysteries, but only to relate the fact and the way of forgiveness, insofar as God has seen fit to reveal it unto us; for the things which are secret belong unto God, the things which have been revealed belong to us and to our children.

In the Scriptures we are repeatedly told that Christ died for our sins. This is in strict agreement with the other announced fact of the Scriptures that the penalty upon sin is death. Even if we had not been told this, that the punishment for sin is death, the fact that Christ is declared to have borne our penalty and taken our place and tasted our cup, and carried our transgressions, would be sufficient to let us know that the penalty upon sin is death, for Christ died for us, and if that was what we deserved, then, certainly, our penalty was death.

The first fact, then, to consider when we behold Christ dying for us on the Cross is the fact that on the Cross and in the death of Christ God is punishing sin. Before we can understand or receive the forgiveness of sin we must understand and accept the punishment of sin. The Cross tells us that God remains just. He gives sin its due. Sin is punished, and punished with death. The Judge of all the earth must do right, and there on the Cross, as the Apostle said, He showed his righteousness.

But, one says, Christ was not a sinner, but, as the Apostle calls Him, "that Just One." How then can we regard the death of the sinless Son of God upon the Cross as an exhibition of the holiness of God? Would it not seem to be rather an exhibition of the lack of justice on the part of God? This objection certainly would be warranted and reasonable, and indeed, unanswerable, if we were told in the Scriptures only that Christ died upon the Cross, and that in the death of Christ God punished sin and upheld the laws of His world. That would have left us staggering in the darkness and wondering how the Judge of all the earth had done right. But side by side with the fact of the death of God's Son on the Cross, we are told that Christ died, not in Himself and by Himself, but as the representative of man, as one who in the Incarnation had assumed, taken upon Himself, our human nature, and therefore was qualified to represent all men before the law of God. The chastisement of our peace, we are told, was laid upon Him. Yet it was done with His consent; it was a voluntary sacrifice. It is not only Christ whom

we see on the Cross, but mankind. Thus God on the Cross neither punished an innocent man nor permitted the guilty to go free. The rock of His justice stands unshaken.

This fact that on the Cross Christ was taking the sinner's place is the heart of the Gospel; and yet it is to this meaning of the Divine Act on Calvary that vigorous and bitter exception is taken, both within and without the Church. No one will take exception to the Cross of Christ as a mere symbol of pathetic, unmerited suffering, an example of sacrificial love, or an appeal to men to repent. But when the Cross is proclaimed, as Christ Himself proclaimed it, and taught His Apostles to proclaim it, then exception is taken. In his book on socialism and woman, Bernard Shaw speaks of those "who actually make their religion in the infamy of loading the guilt and punishment of all their sins on an innocent victim. And likewise another, Blatchford, in *God and my Neighbor,* says, "God acts unjustly when He pardons for Christ's sake. To forgive James because John had been unjustly flogged would be to assert that because John was good, and because the master had acted unjustly, James deserves to be forgiven. This is not only contrary to reason and to justice, it is also very false sentiment."

What is ridiculed, or caricatured, in any system can be counted upon to be the distinctive thing in that system; and the ridicule which writers like these have poured upon the Cross only serves to throw out in relief the distinctive thing in the Cross, and that is that

Christ, the Eternal Son of God, died *for* man, the sinner, the just for the unjust. The Cross does not teach that because an innocent man is punished a guilty man goes free. That misses the grandeur of the Cross. What the Cross teaches is that because Christ, the God-man, bore our sins on the Cross, the guilty man is made guiltless. The righteousness of Christ becomes man's righteousness. Before that truth the penitent bows down, and all that he can says is, "Even so, Lord, for so it hath pleased Thee."

IV.

THE GUARDING AND KEEPING ACT

The Cross is not only the Redeeming and Saving Act of God, but also the Guarding and Preserving Act. It is the greatest motive for true conduct, the fountain of Christian ethics. It is the Act which cancels the guilt of sin, but it also breaks the power of sin. On a Cross on a hill in Prussia are these five lines:

> "From the Cross the tree of shame,
> From this Cross the cure of blame.
> Comes to each repenting soul,
> By a contrite faith made whole,
> Virtue's *flower,* salvation's *dower.*"

The Cross is not only "salvation's dower," it is the flower of virtue. The best defense against evil and temptation in the world is not good advice, or exhortation, or warning; but the Cross. Protestants have a certain repugnance for the Roman Catholic use of the Cross; and yet back of that use of the Cross as a sign and symbol is a true and profound Christian idea, and that is that the Cross is the great defense against evil. It is when we are near to the Cross and are possessed

with the great thought of the Cross, Christ making satisfaction for our sins, that sin has the least power over our lives.

The Cross is the source and fountain of true morality. In the *Life and Journal of David Brainerd,* the great apostle to the Indians, who died in the home of Jonathan Edwards, the editor of his Journal, we have this striking testimony to the practical value of the Cross: "I never got away from Jesus and Him crucified, and I found that when my people were gripped by this great evangelical doctrine of Christ and Him crucified, I had no need to give them instructions about morality. I found that one followed a sure and inevitable fruit of the other."

The great Scottish preacher and mathematician, Thomas Chalmers, bears the same testimony to the Cross as the fountain of morality. His early preaching was ethical and not centered in the Cross. A sickness lifted him into a higher sphere, and henceforth there was a marked change in his preaching. When he was leaving Kilmany for Glasgow, Chalmers made this confession in his farewell sermon: "The interesting fact is, that during the whole of that period in which I made no attempt against the natural enmity of the mind to God, I certainly did press the reformations of honour and truth and integrity among my people, but I never once heard of any such reformations having been effected amongst them. I am not sensible that all the vehemence with which I urged the virtues and the proprieties of social life had the weight of a feather on

the moral habits of my parishioners. And it was not till I got impressed by the utter alienation of the heart in all its desires and affections from God; it was not till reconciliation to Him became the distinct and the prominent object of my ministerial exertions; it was not till the free offer of forgiveness through the blood of Christ was urged upon their acceptance, and the Holy Spirit given through the channel of Christ's mediation to all who ask Him was set before them as the unceasing object of their dependence and their prayers, that I ever heard of any of those subordinate reformations which I aforetime made the earnest and the zealous, but, I am afraid, at the same time, the ultimate object of my earlier ministrations. You have taught me to preach Christ as the only effective way of preaching morality in all its branches; and out of your humble cottages have I gathered a lesson, which I pray God that I may be enabled to carry, with all its simplicity, into a wider theatre."

V.

THE KEY TO LIFE'S MYSTERY

The Cross is the one solution of the mystery of existence. Call the Cross a mystery, if you will, but it is the mystery which solves all other mysteries. Only a suffering God in Christ will do for a suffering world. Deep calleth unto deep. In Turgenev's great novel, *Fathers and Sons,* the dying countess sent back to her lover the ring which he had once given her, and on which was inscribed the sphinx, the symbol of the inexplicable and the mysterious in human life. But over the sphinx the dying woman had cut the sign of the Cross. Only in the light of the Cross can we hold on to God, and only through that light can we believe that all things work together for good to them that love God.

VI.

THE CONQUERING ACT

The Cross is the Conquering Act. It is both a battlefield and a throne. One of the ancient church fathers was wont to see in the Cross the image of a destroying sword thrust into the earth. About the upper end of the Cross, or the hilt of the sword, is clasped the hand of Almighty Power. The outstretched arms of the Cross are the guard of the sword, and the body of the Cross the sharp blade of the sword, driven clear down into the head and heart of the red dragon. Yes, the Cross is the symbol of God's ultimate victory, of the triumph of righteousness in the world. When Christ exclaimed on the Cross, "It is finished," He meant more than that His incomparable sufferings were finished, more than that the satisfaction of sin, perfect sacrifice, was finished. He meant also that the Kingdom of evil, the Kingdom of Satan, was finished. Satan's empire fell when Christ died on the Cross. Were it not for that great finished victory, when we see what is going on in the world and in the church we might well be in despair. But when we see Christ on the Cross, the heavens are aflame with the light of victory, and when we hear Him cry at the ninth hour, "It is finished," we hear the

crash of the walls and strongholds of the kingdom of evil, and the echo of that great voice which John heard crying in heaven, " It is done! It is finished! The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." The idea of a great and happy and righteous end to the drama of human history is one which is borrowed from sacred history. The ancient historians knew nothing of such an end. Herodotus, Thucydides, and the rest of them, had no conception of a great plan and process working out through the ages, and that all creation was moving towards one far off, divine event. That is the idea of the Bible, of Christianity, and the power and the means of that great victory and that divine consummation is the Cross of Christ.

"Many of the purest and noblest spirits of our time," says a writer on the Atonement, "have been forced to the conclusion, that it is hopeless to expect the destruction of certain evils; that nothing more is possible than to regulate and control them. Nor is there so much to congratulate ourselves upon in our literature. The taint may not be so gross, but it is there, though in a subtler form, and not less seductive because it is somewhat disguised; and though much is suppressed, we have now and then terrible indications of what lies behind and beneath that silence, and finds expression in its own place and time.

The development of intellect and culture has done nothing to destroy the power of beasthood. Nay, the intellect has often been used to devise new re-

finements of sin, and from under the decorous exterior, ever and anon leap out startling manifestations of the animal. Even in the best this power is often agonisingly felt. Some of the holiest lives the world has ever known have been darkened and shortened through struggles with the animal nature—the changed soul in the unchanged body, fretting in its prison. And this is the explanation of the astounding falls from high position and profession that often terrify us, and which lead all wise men to pray with St. Augustine—'The Lord deliver me from that wicked man myself.' It is not our business to inquire how far the intellect itself is distorted and perverted through the passions. A striking phrase in one of the prophets says that the sins of the people are written upon the horns of the altar, and much of our popular religion, with its poor and shallow conceptions of sin and righteousness, may take its rise from man's sin. At any rate, the fact remains that the power of the beast is, as it has been, the mightiest in the world." But in the death of Christ on the Cross we have the divine assurance that evil will be banished, that the oft wounded, yet oft healed Beast will receive a death stroke from which he will never recover.

To human view and reason the death of Christ on the Cross loked like a complete victory for Satan, a triumph of evil, the failure of everything which Christ had declared. Even to His own disciples that seemed to be the case, for they confessed after His death, "We hoped that it was He who should redeem Israel."

(A.R.V.) A blood stained naked man hanging on a Cross between two thieves, deserted by His friends, mocked and execrated by His foes. Nevertheless, his cry, his expiring utterance, "It is finished!" proclaimed to heaven and earth and hell the tidings of a great victory. The powers of evil have been overthrown. The prince of evil has received a death blow, and the walls of his empire have been undermined. In this last great battle, the critical, decisive battle between heaven and hell, Christ and Satan, all the reserves and reinforcements of the Kingdom of Satan were thrown into the battle. But, strange as it may seem, when that battle on Calvary was finished there was only one Victor, and that was He Who hung lifeless on the Cross!

The work that was done there marked the overthrow of the Kingdom of evil; a power had been loosed which shall regenerate mankind. No matter what the outward appearance may be today, or how unrestrained and malignant the powers of evil, the work has been done, the victory is assured. The giant of evil, although he still writhes in agony and rage, has received a mortal wound. Christ, the seed of the woman, has bruised the head of the serpent. When Wendell Phillips spoke by the grave of John Brown at North Elba in the Adirondacks, he said, "Marvellous old man! He has abolished slavery in Virginia. True the slave is still there. So when the tempest uproots a pine on your hill, it looks green for months—a year or two. Still it is timber, not a tree. John Brown has loosened the roots of the slave system. It only breathes—it does not live hereafter.

So is it with the tree of the kingdom of evil. Its leaves may still be green, but they grow on a fallen, uprooted tree, a tree that is only lumber, and not a tree."

The Cross is the divine assurance to all our doubts and misgivings, the divine answer to all the failures, to all the half done work of man, to all our broken down and bankrupt schemes of reform and deliverance. Man's work fails and falls, but Christ's work is done. It is finished! It stands forever, and one day the whole universe shall know its blessing.

If the New Testament writers emphasize the personal significance of the Cross; that is, that in what Christ there did and finished is the sinner's hope for redemption, they also emphasize, and with a grandeur which would seem almost to exhaust the resources of inspiration, the effect of the death of Christ upon the whole world of iniquity. Here St. Paul strikes his grandest notes. He says that when Christ, after His death and Resurrection, ascended up on high, He "led captivity captive." How grand is that imagination of the Apostle, he sees all the hosts who have been led captive by Satan released, and all the powers that have enslaved and wronged and degraded and imprisoned man overthrown and themselves thrust into captivity.

But still grander is the Apostle's burst of inspired eloquence when he says that Christ, having died on the Cross, and having spoiled principalities and powers, made a show of them openly, triumphing over them. Here Paul draws his metaphor from the most magnificent spectacle of the ancient world, a Roman triumph.

First came the battle. Christ had won the battle and spoiled and disarmed his enemies and man's enemies on the Cross. Now after the victory comes the triumph. That was the great spectacle of the ancient world. Sometimes these triumphs came long after the war was over and peace had been established. On the great day the multitudes lined the highways, crowding the streets, or stood on the top of the walls as the procession of victory and triumph entered Rome. Arrayed in silken garments and crowned with garlands, the conqueror rode in his chariot, girt with laurel, and drawn by white steeds, at the head of his victorious legions. As the procession moved toward the wall of the city along the Appian Way or the Via Sacra, successive pageants and pantomimes and great illustrated maps displayed the incidents of the battles and sieges in far off parts of the world, while clouds of incense went up to heaven from the altars which had been reared along the line of march. And chained to the wheels of the conqueror were the kings and princes and potentates whom he had taken captive.

This was the great spectacle that Paul had in mind when he said that Christ on the Cross had spoiled principalities and powers, not only those that we know and see in this visible world, but the principalities and powers of the invisible world, too, out of every province of Satan's Kingdom, and then made a show of them openly and dragged them in triumph as he rode to victory.

Yes! Christ reigns from the Cross! The building of

a new humanity has not yet been completed, but the foundation has been laid. And when the building has been completed, when all the redeemed have been brought in, when every stone, polished after the similitude of a palace, has been fitted into place, that glorious temple of a saved world will rest upon the sure foundation which Christ laid upon Calvary.

Part Four

THE CHRISTIAN DESTINY

I.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A BELIEF IN A FUTURE STATE

In his book, *Far Away and Long Ago,* one of the most notable of American writers, W. H. Hudson, author of *Green Mansions,* and *Days in Patagonia,* gives an account of his early life in South America. He commences with a moving story of the death of Caesar, the family dog. A grave was dug among the peach trees, and the body of the dog was lowered into it and the red earth shovelled in. As all were standing silently around, the schoolmaster, Mr. Trigg, seeking to improve the occasion, and assuming his schoolroom expression, looked round on the boys and said solemnly, "That's the end. Every dog has his day, and so has every man; and the end is the same for both. We die like old Caesar, and are put into the ground and have the earth shovelled over us."

Hudson says that these simple common words affected him more than any words he had heard in his life. They pierced him to the heart with terror. His end was to be just like that of Caesar. But when his mother lifted his mind to higher thoughts and assured him that his end would be different than that of the dog, and that he could not really die, he experienced

an immense relief. The terrible darkness that had come over his soul was gone.

Yes, it does make all the difference in the world, if our end is just like that of Caesar, the dog. "Eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." This generation of men, like every other generation, must choose between these two theories of life; that life ends just as the dog ends, that we are pushed into a trench and the earth shovelled over us, or that life goes on forever. Caesar's end or the Christian destiny—which shall it be? Herr Einstein, whose name, strangely enough, is cut in the stones of a Christian Church in New York, writing on this subject said: "Neither can I believe that the individual survives the death of his body, although feeble souls harbor such thoughts through fear or ridiculous egotism. It is enough for me to contemplate the mystery of conscious life perpetuating itself through all eternity." You must make your choice, therefore, between such blank denial and the faith of souls like St. Paul and St. John, and Jesus, who lift our lives into Eternity.

Even if there were no future life, the man who believes in the life to come is at a great advantage over the man who says he has no faith in future existence. This was the position taken by Cicero in his essay on *Old Age,* where he puts into the mouth of Cato, his highest thought of the life to come. He says, "For these reasons, O Scipio, old age is tolerable to me, and not only not irksome, but even delightful. And if I am wrong in this, that I believe the souls of men to be immortal, I willingly delude myself; nor do I desire

that this mistake in which I take pleasure should be wrested from me as long as I live: but if I, when dead, shall have no consciousness, as some narrow-minded philosophers imagine, I do not fear lest dead philosophers should ridicule this, my dead delusion."

The same idea is expressed by Lord Byron in the letter he wrote to the husband of a deceased woman who had left among her papers a beautiful prayer for the conversion of the poet. When the prayer was sent to him, Byron, touched by its simple beauty, wrote to her husband, "I can assure you that all the fame which ever cheated humanity into higher notions of its own importance would never weigh on my mind against the pure and pious interest which a virtuous being may be pleased to take in my welfare. In this point of view, I would not exchange the prayers of the deceased in my behalf for the united glory of Homer, Caesar, and Napoleon, could such be accumulated upon a living head. Indisputably, the firm believers in the Gospel have a great advantage over all others—for this simple reason, that, if true, they will have their reward hereafter; and if there be no hereafter, they can be but with the infidel in his eternal sleep, having had the assistance of an exalted hope in new life without subsequent disappointment, since (that the worst of them) 'out of nothing nothing can arise,' not even sorrow."[1]

John tells us in the Apocalypse that he saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the

1. Dick, *Philosophy of the Future State*, p. 216, E. C. and J. Biddle, Phila.

first earth were passed away. When man ceases to be able to see what John saw, a new heaven and a new earth, then midnight has come down upon the whole creation.

The three great questions which confront man are these: Whence come I? What ought I to do? Whither am I going? Origin, duty, destiny, and the greatest of these, because of its bearing on the second, is destiny. Religion arises out of the third question. If there were no death, there would be no religion. Nothing, therefore, could be stranger than that men should ignore the illimitable stretches of the future life, and at the same time be harrassed and disturbed by the petty irritations of time.

Deadness and silence on this subject of our future destiny does not bode good for mankind, and certainly not for the Christian Church. In the 18th century men tried to rationalize Christianity by making it consist only of that which was in keeping with what was called reason. But today, Christianity is being rationalized by being secularized; that is, by confining it to this world only. Clarence Darrow, noted for his unbelief, in a book published a quarter of a century ago,[1] describes the village where he was born, with the old mill where his father was the miller, the bridge over the river, and the church on the hill where he attended Sunday School. In speaking on the graveyard back of the church, he comes naturally to comment on death and what comes after. "And still I fancy," he says, "that I am like all

1. *Farmington,* Charles Scribner's Sons

the other men and women who were ever born. We eat and drink and laugh and dance, and go our way along the path of life, and join the universal conspiracy to keep silent on the momentous event that year by year draws closer and closer to our lives." It does, indeed, seem that there is a conspiracy to keep silent about the Christian destiny, to

> "Push eternity from human thought,
> And smother souls immortal
> In the dust."

But the man who has no contact with the future life, and with that far greater, though invisible world, is at the best but an amiable and, perhaps, educated animal. We are all familiar with the lines of Pope:

> "Hope springs eternal in the human breast,
> Man never is, but always to be blessed;"

But we are not so familiar with the two lines which follow, and which are these:

> "The soul, uneasy and confined from home,
> Rests and expatiates in a life to come."[1]

This will always be true of thoughtful and earnest men. Their souls demand another world in which to "expatiate."

1. Pope, *Essay on Man.*

Belief in a future destiny is the mainspring of the moral government of God. It is this conviction which gives dignity to human nature, and belief in immortality is the only key which fits the lock of human existence, for it gives a meaning and a purpose to our life. Coming from a funeral where he heard the minister read the sentence from St. Paul's great chapter on immortality, "If the dead rise not let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die," Thomas Huxley protested against such an appraisal of life. But, St. Paul's proposition and conclusion are sound. If this life were all, then there is no sound reason for noble living or entertaining noble thoughts. Life without a future destiny, Paul declared, as far as he himself was concerned, would be worse than mockery. All his heroic efforts for righteousness and for the good of his fellow beings were wasted efforts, "If," he declared, "after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth me?" Almost the last words of Daniel Webster, when he lay dying at Marshfield, were these: "The great mystery is Jesus Christ—the Gospel. What would be the condition of any one of us, if we had not the hope of immortality?"

We can arrive at a conception of what human society would be without any thought of, or hope for, immortality only when we take an individual life which has abandoned that hope and multiply it by millions of others. The dying Webster wondered what would be the condition of any one of us if we had not the hope of immortality. So, we ask, what would be the

condition of the world, of human society, without that hope? In his *American Commonwealth,* James Bryce tries to imagine what the effect of the loss of belief in God and in the future life would have upon one of our great cities. He says: "Standing in the midst of a great American city, one is startled by the thought of what might befall this huge, yet delicate, fabric of laws and commerce and social institutions were the foundation it has rested upon, to crumble away. Suppose that all these men ceased to believe that there was any power above them, any future before them, anything in heaven and earth, but what their senses told them of. Would men say, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die'? Or would custom and sympathy and a perception of the advantages which stable government offers to citizens as a whole, and which orderly self restraint offers to each one, replace supernatural sanctions, and hold in check the violence of the masses and the self indulgent impulses of the individual? History, if she cannot give a complete answer to this question, tells us that hitherto civilized society has rested on religion, and that free government has prospered best among religious peoples."

Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* said many things against the Christians and the Christian faith; but he said one true thing when he listed among the five causes for the rapid spread and conquest of Christianity in the Roman world its doctrine of a future life. Important as that doctrine has been, wherever Christianity has won conquests, the

converse certainly will be true. Christianity without the doctrine of the future will win no conquests and human society without a belief in the future life will become degraded. "Let us not deceive ourselves;" wrote Renan, "man is governed by nothing but his conception of the future. Any nation which en masse gives up all faith in what lies beyond the grave will become utterly degraded." In *The Brothers Karamazov,* Dostoievski makes Ivan say, "If you were to destroy in mankind the belief in immortality, not only love, but every living force containing the life of the world, would at once be dried up. Moreover nothing, then, would be immoral. Everything would be lawful, including cannibalism . . . . There is no virtue, if there is no immortality." This is only what Paul said ages ago, "If not, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." If you persuade a man that he dies just like a dog, it is only natural that he should begin to live like a dog.

In his *Genius of Christianity,* Chateaubriand has a striking passage in which he speaks of the relation of morality to belief in immortality: "Morality is the basis of society; but if man is a mere mass of matter, there is in reality neither vice nor virtue, and of course morality is a mere sham. Our laws, which are ever relative and variable, cannot serve as the support of morals, which are always absolute and unalterable; they must, therefore, rest on something more permanent than the present life and have better guarantees than uncertain rewards or transient punishment. Some

philosophers have supposed that religion was invented in order to uphold morality: they were not aware that they were taking the effect for the cause. It is not religion that springs from morals, but morals that spring from religion; since it is certain, as we have just observed, that morals cannot have their principle in *physical* man or *mere matter;* and that men no sooner divest themselves of the idea of a God than they rush into every species of crime in spite of laws and executioners."[1]

In one of the sublimest chapters of the Bible (I Cor. 15) St. Paul reaches this great conclusion: "Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." He bases that great assurance upon the hope of immortality that the Christian has in Jesus Christ. One can feel the power of Paul's argument if one tries to imagine the apostle giving that great assurance of the eternal worthwhileness of life to those troubled Corinthians on any other ground.

1. Chateaubriand, *Genius of Christianity,* Book VI, Chapter 3. The tribute of Chateaubriand, who himself in his famous book is an illustration of the genius of Christianity, is all the more striking because he was a man who lapsed from Christian faith and then returned to it. When in exile in London in 1798, he received news of the death of his mother, with a message from his sister telling him that his mother had died with a prayer on her lips for the conversion of her gifted son. Shortly afterwards he received news of the death of the sister also. These events brought him back to Christian faith. He says: "Those two voices coming up from the grave, and that death which had now become the interpreter of death, struck me with peculiar force. I became a Christian. I did not yield to any great supernatural light; my conviction came from the heart. I wept and I believed." Thus brought back to Christian faith, Chateaubriand resolved to consecrate to religion the pen which had expressed the unbelief of his times, and his immortal work, *The Genius of Christianity* was the result.

Suppose Paul had made the immortality of the race the ground of this great assurance. Suppose he had said: "My friends, you will die and disappear forever, all of you. But remember that the human race is immortal; it goes on forever. The generations of men come and go like the leaves on the tree with every season. The leaves pass, but the tree remains. So, although the generations of men disappear, the human race remains forever. The stream of humanity flows forever on. Therefore, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain."

Or suppose Paul had based his great assurance upon the immortality of influence. Suppose he had said: "My beloved friends, all must die. The grave will close over you as the river closes over the stone which is cast into it and sinks to the bottom. But remember the influence of a good life goes on forever. If you have lived well, your influence is immortal. You join the choir of those immortal dead, 'who live again in minds made better by their presence.' Therefore, be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

Or suppose Paul had based his great assurance on the ever present fact of Duty. Suppose he had said: "My friends, you will all die, and when you die, that is the end of you. Life beyond the grave is just a dream, a delusion. But remember that even if there is no life beyond the grave, there is always Duty to be faced and to be done here. Even if there is no life beyond the grave, still it is better to be brave than a

coward, to be true than to be false, to be kind than to be cruel, to be chaste than licentious."

Can we imagine the troubled and grieving people of Corinth, or of our world today, getting any strength or satisfaction or hope out of such assertions as these, that the race is immortal, that influence is immortal, and that although we have no future Destiny, we have ever present Duty? Paul belonged to an immortal race, the Hebrew, if there ever was such a race; Paul wielded a greater influence than perhaps any other man in the history of the world; Paul met and discharged his duty with more heroism than any one who can be named. Yet it is this same Paul who says that if death is the end—all, then we might as well forget all about virtue and truth and honor, and take for our motto in life, "Eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

The force of the apostle's argument, especially with regard to Duty, is seen in the fact that what we speak of as virtues have their meaning only in the light of immortality and the divine constitution of man's nature.

A great English preacher, describing the darkness that comes over the soul when the grave appears to be the end of all, and life has lost its meaning, commends to the troubled soul the holding fast to the grand facts of morality and Duty: "In the darkest hour through which a human soul can pass, whatever else is doubtful, this, at least, is certain, — If there be no God and no future state, even then it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be brave than to be a coward. Blessed, beyond all

earthly blessedness, is the man who in the tempestuous darkness of the soul has dared to hold fast to these venerable landmarks. Thrice blessed is he who, when all is drear and cheerless within and without, when his teachers terrify him, and his friends shrink from him, has obstinately clung to moral good. Thrice blessed, because *his* night shall pass into clear bright day."[1]

Commenting on this passage a noted English writer says, "Now there is a great truth, a most sacred and solemn truth in these words, but it is only a half truth, and it should not be mistaken for the whole truth. It is not less true, and it is true, perhaps, of a far greater number of human souls, that there are dark and dreadful hours when they are tempted to believe that virtue is but a name, that generosity is not better than selfishness, and truth not better than falsehood, and the courage which defends a post of dangerous duty not better than the cowardice which abandons it; and in these hours I know not how the soul is to regain its trust in human goodness except by holding fast its faith in divine goodness; or how it can be strengthened to cling to what is right except by cleaving to God. It is as possible to doubt of the authority of conscience as to doubt the existence of God. There are few souls which have not their Philippi when they are tempted to cry like Brutus, 'O Virtue, Thou art but an empty Name!' Blessed in such an hour is he who, feeling himself to be sinking in gloomy waters, cries to that God who is able to rescue him from the abyss, and

1. Robertson, F. W.

clings to that justice in heaven which is the pledge that justice will be done on earth below."[1]

The argument there brought out, that if one loses faith in God, one will also lose faith in conscience and duty, applies also to immortality. That is the argument of the apostle. If there is no future life there is no binding duty here. Only he who knows Destiny knows Duty.

George John Romanes, the brilliant Oxford biologist, author of *Jellyfish,* and *Starfish, Darwin* and *After Darwin,* who at the close of his life returned to Christian faith, published in 1876, *A Candid Examination of Theism.* The book indicates his, at that time, complete break with Christianity. His position then was virtually that of a materialist, yet having once believed in the Christian faith, he is fully and bitterly conscious of the different outlook he now has. In a striking passage he writes:

"And so far as the ruination of individual happiness is concerned, no one can have a more lively perception than myself of the possibly disastrous tendency of my work. It becomes my obvious duty to stifle all belief of the kind which I conceive to be the noblest, and to discipline my intellect with regard to this matter into an attitude of the purest skepticism. And, forasmuch as I am far from being able to agree with those who affirm that the twilight doctrine of the 'new faith' is a desirable substitute for the waning splendor of 'the old,' I am not ashamed to confess that with this virtual

1. Flint, *Theism.*

negation of God the universe to me has lost its soul of loveliness; and although from henceforth the precept to 'work while it is day' will doubtless but gain an intensified force from the terribly intensified meaning of the words, that 'the night cometh when no man can work,' yet when at times I think, and think I must at times, of the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of that creed that once was mine, and the lonely mystery of existence as now I find it, at such times I shall ever feel it impossible to avoid the sharpest pang of which my nature is susceptible. For whether it be due to my intelligence not being sufficiently advanced to meet the requirements of the age, or whether it is due to the memory of those sacred associations which to me at least were the sweetest that life has given, I cannot but feel that for me, and for others who think as I do, there is a dreadful truth in those words of Hamilton, 'Philosophy having become a mediation not merely of death, but of annihilation, the precept, KNOW THYSELF, has become transformed into the terrific oracle of Oedipus—Mayest thou never know the truth of what thou art!' "

The theoretical and philosophical, and so called scientific, denial of the Christian Destiny is not so dangerous as the practical denial of it by those who live as if there were no future life. The Bible and our Christian faith assume, rather than define, or argue for, the Christian destiny. In this connection it is well to remember that if no one can demonstrate the future life in the way in which we demonstrate things in this

world, neither can anyone demonstrate that there is no future life, and from any standpoint, the believer in the future life has a great advantage over the unbeliever. In his dialogue between two Chinamen, Voltaire makes one say to the other that he must not make a wrong use of his reason in this world, lest he be unhappy, not only in this life, but in the world to come. "And who told you that there is another life?" his friend responded. The other answered, "The bare uncertainty of it should make you behave as if it were an undoubted certainty." "But what if I be sure that there is no such thing?" "That I defy you to make good."

What we can be sure of is that a future destiny of glory and of happiness fits in with the best desires and highest instincts of our present life. Hortense, the sister-in-law of Napoleon, writing to her son, Napoleon III, when he was an exile in America, expressed to him her confidence that they would meet again. "Have faith in this consoling idea. It is too necessary not to be true." This was the letter Napoleon carried in his wallet to the day of his death. After all so-called arguments for immortality have been summed up, that comment of Hortense leaves little to be said. "It is *too necessary* not to be true."

II.

THE NATURE OF THE LIFE TO COME

What can we say about the nature of the new heaven and the new earth? Christ taught us to pray that God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. But how is it in heaven? Marco Polo, the famous Venetian explorer of the 13th century, when he lay dying on his death bed was urged by his attendants to recant and withdraw the stories about China and the lands of the Far East; replied, "It is more wonderful, than anything I have told." How true this is concerning that still "undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns."

Thomas Browne in the *Religio Medici,* speaking of the future life, says that the wisest of men talking about it are like two babes in the womb discoursing on this life. But the simile is not altogether apt. Experimentally, perhaps, what he says is so; but when we come to imagination, to reason, and to desire, men have much to guide them in their thought as to the principles of a life to come. We know, at least, what would please us and what would not please us in that life.

Our Lord spoke of heaven as a place, "I go," He

said, "to prepare a place for you." He did not say "a state," although it is that, too, but "a place." John saw a new heaven and a new earth, and that heaven and that earth are to be the place of the new life after death. This fits in with what we know of ourselves, for we know ourselves not as a body, or as a spirit, but as body *and* spirit. We are not a wisp, a ghostly wraith, but spirits clad in a body. The idea of the future existence of the spirit by itself is not at all a Christian idea. It is often touched upon in the pagan writers, and if that were the whole Christian idea of the future life, then there would be no sense in saying that Christ brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel. What we believe in is the resurrection of the body *and* the life everlasting. There is a natural body, and a spiritual body, and that spiritual body must have a place, a stage, a platform, for its existence.

But where is that place? Some imagine that this world will be the abode of redeemed men. Christ taught us to pray, that God's will might be done on earth as it is in heaven. When that is so, then earth, in a sense, will be like heaven. If you could rid earth of sin and pain and sorrow, it would be hard to imagine a grander platform upon which redeemed spirits might act their eternal part. As the world came into being the Creator declared it "all very good." Yet even the physical world and the material universe would require not merely moral regeneration and renovation, but would itself require to be changed and renovated, because there is much that is harsh and

hostile and cruel in nature as we know it. The great prophets who predicted the glories of the Messianic reign acknowledged the necessity of the change in the earth itself. The desert is to blossom like the rose. The hostilities between man and the beast come to an everlasting truce:

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11.)

But against this idea of the present creation as the platform of the future life are those frequent passages which seem to tell us that the heavens and the earth shall pass away, be rolled up like a scroll, or melt with the fervent heat. Science itself hints at such an ending for the physical universe, and to that the inspired imagination of man also agrees. In the beautiful lines of The Tempest:

"The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherits, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind."[1]

Ezekiel was in Babylon, Stephen in Jerusalem, John in the Isle of Patmos; and yet they all saw into heaven. It may be that heaven, this spiritual place for spiritual bodies, lies all about us. What we know is that God has plenty of room in His universe for a place. When scientific adventurers recently sailed into what they called the stratosphere, a distance of eleven miles, the news was flashed around the world as something wonderful and extraordinary. In a sense, indeed, it is wonderful; but in another sense, how humbling! Only eleven miles off our planet into the limitless universe of God! Looking on our planet, an observer in the star Sirius could see events on the earth only as they happened eight years ago; and from a fixed star, as they happened nineteen centuries ago. If a beam of light which travels at the rate of six hundred and seventy-two million miles an hour were to set out on a journey round the universe, it would never accomplish its goal, for the universe grows more rapidly than light could travel. This lets us know that ages upon ages, aeons upon aeons, will have to pass before a generation of men could get as far even as the outermost hem of the garment of God's universe. Yes, God

1. Shakespeare, *The Tempest.*

has plenty of room for a "place."

The place, indeed, is important, but not so important as the state, just as the people who live in a house are more important and interesting than the house itself. We read of expeditions to polar regions, where there is nothing but whales, polar bears, snow, ice, and silence. But the interesting parts of the earth are those which have been the habitations of mankind, where kingdoms and empires have risen and fallen, and the long drama of human history has unfolded itself. A square mile of Asia Minor is worth more than all the vast territory of the Arctic and the Antarctic regions. So heaven is of interest to us, not so much for its location, its geography or topography, as for the life that is lived there.

When we come to contemplate that life we must depend entirely upon what Christ and His apostles taught. Since man was made in the image of God, it is possible for him to have some reasonable expectation and imagination of his future destiny. Yet the hope of it rests in Christ. Standing on Mars Hill in Athens, where Paul preached the Gospel, and his audience broke up in mockery when he came to speak of the resurrection of the dead, one can see on the side of the hill across the valley the supposed prison of Socrates, whose utterances on the subject of the life to come represent the utmost of pre-Christian thought and imagination. Yet hardly anyone ever goes to visit that prison, while thousands climb the hill to stand where Paul stood and proclaimed the doctrine of Christ

and the Resurrection.

One of the high water marks of Greek thought and hope concerning man's destiny is found in Plato's Phaedo, where he puts into the mouth of Socrates what is almost a cry for the Christian revelation: "We must either learn truth from others or find it out for ourselves. If both ways fail us, amidst all human reasons we must fix upon the strongest and most forcible, and trust to that as to a ship, while we pass through this stormy sea and endeavor to avoid its tempests, until we find out one more firm and sure, such as a promise or revelation, upon which we may happily accomplish the voyage of this life as in a vessel that fears no danger."

The "promise," or "revelation," after which Plato longed came in Christ, Who brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel. Speaking at the grave of his brother Ebon, who died in 1879, the eloquent agnostic, Robert C. Ingersoll, said, "Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of a wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead, there comes no word; but in the night of death hope sees a star, and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing. He who sleeps here, when dying, mistaking the approach of death for the return of health, whispered with his latest breath, 'I am better now.' Let us believe, in spite of doubts and dogmas and tears and fears, that these dear words are true of all the count-

less dead."

Beautiful words these, but only words. The only ground upon which we can rest our hope that our beloved dead are "better now" is Jesus Christ, the Resurrection and the Life.

Why do we not have more explicit teaching in the New Testament on the subject of our future existence? Christ, Who knew all, said very little by way of description, and there is a noble reserve on the part of the inspired writers whenever they touch upon this subject. The reason may be that in our present state we are not able to understand the language of heaven. Paul was caught up into the third heaven and saw and heard wonderful things; but such things as could not be uttered to man; and even John, who at Patmos had a door opened for him into heaven, when he comes to write in his old age to his friends and disciples, contents himself with saying that, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." This inability on our part to understand descriptions of that future life probably accounts for the fact that much which is told us concerning it is on the negative side. Thus, what John tells us in the Apocalypse is chiefly on the negative side, what is not there; and yet what is told us is pleasing and satisfying to the heart and to the mind. Let us see what this is.

"There shall be no more curse." That means that there shall be no more sin, for sin and its consequences, its curse, are used interchangeably in the Scriptures. Wherever sin is, there also is its curse.

The shadow of sin falls everywhere across the world, but now the long reign of sin is ended. "There shall be no more death." Death is an old, old fashion, for the wages of sin is death. Death and sin ride together in our world; and what a reign death has had; from the day that Cain looked down upon the dying Abel whose blood the earth had swallowed up, to him who at the latest moment has paid the debt we owe to nature! But now the last enemy has been destroyed. Death has lost its sting and the grave has been robbed of its victory.

"There shall be no more pain." Who, standing by the bed of the sufferer, especially if that sufferer is a little child, or walking down the corridors of the hospital, has not wished that he had the power to banish pain? I have no doubt that our Lord had that same desire. Yet pain in our present dispensation serves its purpose as the minister and surgeon of God. But in the life to come there shall be no more pain. No groan of misery shall be heard by day and no cry of agony shall break the silence of the night.

"There shall be no more sorrow or crying." How great is the capacity of the human heart for sorrow. So universal a fact is sorrow, that when our Lord came to identify Himself with mankind, He was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. Jesus Himself wept; and through the whole creation rolls the dirge of human sorrow. How wonderful then is this promise that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

"There shall be no night there." "The gates of the

city shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there." This, of course, is figurative language, and what it tells us is that there shall be no more sin, which brings midnight on the soul, and no more sorrow, which brings midnight on the heart. All these are negative statements about the future life, and yet how beautiful, winsome, and soul-satisfying they are. There is nothing that the mind can imagine which ought to be added to them.

But now let us look on the positive side. There is, first of all, the perfect organ for the perfect life, and that is the Body of the Resurrection. The body of our humiliation is to be changed and made like unto the glorious body of Christ. James Russell Lowell prepared for his grave this epitaph, which, however, was not inscribed on his tomb:

"Here lies that part of James Russell Lowell
which hindered him from doing well."

In one sense that is true, for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and ofttimes when the spirit is willing the flesh is pitifully weak. Yet in another sense, what a marvellous thing even this body of our humiliation is, and how true it is that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. How perfectly and immediately the body can express the thought or purpose, the grief or joy of the spirit. If this is true of the body, even in its present state of humiliation, what will it be like when it has been changed, transformed, into a spiritual body

and made like unto His own glorious body. The epitaph which Benjamin Franklin prepared for his grave, but like that of Lowell, never used, is a far better estimate of the body than the epitaph by Lowell. It was as follows:

The Body
of
Benjamin Franklin
Printer
(Like the cover of an old book
Its contents torn out
And stript of its lettering and gilding)
Lies here, food for worms.
But the work shall not be lost
For it will (as he believed) appear once more
In a new and more elegant edition
Revised and corrected
by
The Author.

The historic creed of Christianity affirms, as do the Scriptures, not only the continued existence of the soul, but the resurrection of the body. The glorious consummation of man is, as Paul puts it, "to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." Thus the Apostle's Creed does full justice to the content of Scripture when it affirms, "I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting." It is true that there are many Sadducees in our midst today

who deny the Resurrection and boldly mock when it is mentioned, as did the philosophers on Mars Hill when Paul preached to them on that subject. But the present popular discounting of the Resurrection of man cannot discount or cancel the declaration of this doctrine by Christ and His Apostles.

In describing, as far as he does describe it, this 'spiritual body,' the body of the Resurrection, Paul gives us this clue, and it is the only clue we have to that heavenly and spiritual body. He says that Christ has "become the first fruits of them that slept." That metaphor, "the first fruits," carries us back through the ages to the Book of Leviticus, where the law was given that when the harvest was ready the first fruits, the first sheaf of the ripened grain, was to be waved before the altar as a token of consecration and thanksgiving. That first sheaf of wheat or barley, or other grain, was like every other sheaf that was harvested in the same field, and all the other sheaves were like that first sheaf. So, says St. Paul, the Resurrection body of Christ was the first fruits, or the example, the model, the sample, the pattern, the prophecy, of every believer's Resurrection life and body.

Whatever mystery may rest over the Resurrection Body of our Lord, we know this at least from the gospel records, that it was a body which was definitely, in some way, related to the personality and the body of Christ which the disciples had known before His death. It is clear, too, that in some respects it was a different body. But whatever it was, that Resurrection

Body of Christ left behind it the impression of great power and majesty, as during those forty days between His resurrection and His ascension He moved along the margin between the earthly and the Heavenly life, the visible and the invisible world. How magnificent and sublime a revelation it is, then, that we have from St. Paul, when he says that Christ is the first fruits of them that slept, that our resurrection body is to be like His. "It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." For the full meaning of that glorious consummation and inheritance, what St. Peter calls our "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved for us in heaven," we must be content to wait until we ourselves have "put on immortality."

The difficulties and objections which have always been raised in connection with this great mystery, before which it behooves us to be humble, the Resurrection life and the Resurrection Body, afford no ground for the ignoring or rejection of the teaching of Christianity and the Scriptures on this great theme. To all such objections no better answer was ever rendered than that by the eloquent Tertullian, in *Apologies,* who said, "Tell me what thou art, and I will tell thee what thou shalt be." Who of us can tell what he is? Who, therefore, can tell what he shall become?

III.

CAN THE LIVING COMMUNICATE WITH THE DEAD?

During the last World War there was a great upsurge of interest in the subject of immortality, and especially in the possibility of communication between the living and the dead. There is no doubt that the present World War will occasion a new emergence of interest in this subject. The Bible always takes for granted two worlds, the visible and the invisible, the natural and the supernatural. It gives the record, too, without explanation, of communications brought by celestial beings to mortal men.

We often ask ourselves, How did Abraham, or Joshua, or Isaiah, or Mary, or Paul, or John, know that it was a messenger from the other world that had spoken to them? The naiveness of the narrative, its simplicity and straightforwardness puzzles us; and yet it is that very simplicity which gives the ring of reality to the narrative. Once in the Old Testament a man in the flesh receives a message from a man who had died and passed into the world of spirits. There have been various interpretations of the story of how the Witch of Endor brought

up Samuel to speak to Saul and pronounce his doom in the coming battle with the Philistines. (I Samuel 28.) But the story certainly gives the impression that the spirit of Samuel actually appeared. If it was only a fraud, then there would be no explanation of the fright of the woman of Endor. But the record of such a communication as this is very far from the teaching that men today can, if they desire, have communications with the dead.

The Bible certainly teaches the persistence of the spirit, and in one or two instances, such as the appearance of Samuel to Saul, and Moses and Elijah on the mount with Jesus, shows the living conversing with the dead. But nowhere in the Bible is the possibility of this taught as a ground for our comfort and our hope.

One of the notable books which appeared during the last war was Sir Oliver Lodge's *Raymond,* or *Life and Death.* For many years Sir Oliver Lodge ranked as the chief of English physicists. He belonged to that class of men, scientists, who of all men are the most reluctant to admit any world beyond that which the eye can see and the hand can handle.

His son Raymond, a splendid youth of twenty-six, enlisted early in the British army and was killed in September, 1915, in the fighting in Flanders. In what he calls the "normal" part of his book, Sir Oliver, together with another son, pays a beautiful tribute to the character of the dead son and brother:

"Who will believe us when we cry,
He was as great as he was brave?
His name that years had lifted high
Lies buried in that Belgian grave.

"Oh strong and patient, kind and true,
Valiant of heart, and clear of brain—
They cannot know the man we knew
Our words go down the wind like rain."

In other words, this father and mother and these brothers and sisters thought of that dead soldier just what thousands of others have thought of sons and brothers sacrificed in the same war. A day or two before the telegram from the war office came announcing that he had been killed, Sir Oliver was at Gullane, playing golf. Unusually skilled at that sport, he found himself unable to play, not merely poorly, but at all, and abandoning the game went back to his hotel.

Not long after the death of his son, the father and the mother, and finally all the members of the Lodge family, began to have, or imagine that they had, communications from the son who had been killed. Those communications came through various mediumships that are commonly adopted by the professors of this occult science. In a book of huge dimensions Sir Oliver has given what he says is a careful transcript of the questions, answers, and divers communications. From all this, one would gather the following:

The dead have a desire to communicate with the living and are often grieved at the indifference of their terrestrial relatives and friends, who do not permit them to speak. In fact, whatever one makes of the whole extraordinary book, one cannot but feel the pathos of this dead son eagerly accepting every opportunity that is afforded him of speaking with his parents and family. Is it possible that the majority of mankind need to be prayed for as Elisha prayed for the young man at Dothan, "Lord, open his eyes that he may see?"

The natural grief of the family is quickly tempered by the growing conviction that he is leading a useful and not unhappy life, and they rejoice at their discovery that great as is the chasm of death, love is able to bridge it. He tells them that he has noble work to do, that he helps over all those other soldiers who have been killed. As to the nature of the new world he has much to say, much that strikes us as what we might have expected, much that appeals to us as contemptible and absurd. He has a real body, but it is different from the present body. He lives in a house that seems to be brick. He sees the sun, but feels no heat from it. The wounded who come over are at once supplied with lost limbs, but those who have been blown to pieces with shells are with difficulty restored to complete manhood again; and bodies which have been cremated before seven days had passed cause no end of trouble. His father asks him if he would like to have a Ford. He says he would, but prefers an aeroplane. There

are cats, dogs, horses and birds there, but no lions, tigers or children. Every Thursday night he must sing hymns, although not much accustomed to that pastime. Some of the dead who have gone over make strange requests; one wants a cigar and is given it; another, a whisky soda. There are men and women, but the marriage relation does not exist and sexual life is not known. There is no hell, but sort of a reformatory. It is a place of progress, and men advance from one sphere to another. Prayer helps him even there, keeping the devil away. But the great experience is the beatific vision of Christ. It was something, he says, that thrilled him unspeakably, but he is unable to give any adequate account of it.

To all this extraordinary account of the life of the departed, what has the Christian to say? In the first place, only the eminence of the author as a scientific investigator makes the book for a moment to be thought of. It cannot be denied that he writes frankly, as if trying to tell all, and with a sense of duty, that for the sake of others he ought to lay bare even the intimate experiences of his own household. In regard to the communications themselves, the majority of them are either contemptible and unthinkable, or trivial, empty and vain. Whatever is worthy in them, the idea of progress and advancement, of noble service, and, finally, the Presence of Jesus Christ, is only a reflection of Christian faith.

It need not be demonstrated that this man is self deceived, and certainly we do not believe him to be

a deliberate impostor. But the most careful collection of these communications made through a long period of time, and in all the approved methods of spirit communication, only go to show, on the one hand, the vanity of it all, as evidence of the immortality of the soul, and on the other, the vanity of it as adding anything worth while to our conception of the life to come. You lay down this ponderous volume with the words of St. Paul sounding with new meaning in your ears, "We walk by faith and not by sight."

There may be nothing unreasonable or unlikely about the living holding intercourse with the departed, but as a contribution to religion it is nothing. When Jesus said in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, "*Though* one rose from the dead," you might infer that He meant to teach that such intercourse and communication is impossible. But possible or impossible, either as a ground of belief or as a moral influence inducing men to live better lives, we have no reason to think that it would have any weight. Sir Oliver Lodge quotes the letter of a distracted mother who thinks that her son has spoken: "I say 'from him;' the whole torturing question is, Is it from him, or am I self deceived?" Who, receiving messages of this sort, will not ask such questions? We can only say,

"I hear a wind of memory, murmuring the past."

The great demonstration of the life to come is the Resurrection of Christ from the dead. Of the myriads who,

"Before us passed the doors of darkness through,"

He is the only One who has come back to tell of the Road. He is the Faithful Witness, the first begotten from the dead. Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. Here we have for evidence, not the disordered dreams of grief distraught minds, but the testimony of many faithful witnesses which has produced the agelong miracle of Christian life and the glorious Christian hope. For the individual Christ has forever demonstrated the eternal life.

The Greeks had a profound legend of the Sphinx. According to the legend, the Sphinx, half human and half beast, crouched in monstrous form and shape by the highway where all men had to pass. To every traveler she propounded her riddle. If the traveler could not solve the riddle, he perished. Ages passed, and generation after generation of travelers perished as they approached the inscrutable Sphinx. But one day a traveler came who guessed the riddle. Whereupon the Sphinx in chagrin and rage killed herself. Like the cruel Sphinx of that ancient legend, death has crouched by the wayside and sentenced to destruction and annihilation generation after generation of mankind, for none could solve its riddle; not the wisest or the greatest or the saintliest; no sage or seer or philosopher or poet or prophet. But one day the Son of God came in the flesh and suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, and rose again from the dead, and the mystery of death was unveiled and the dominion of death was broken. How magni-

ficent are those words which John at Patmos heard Jesus speak as He stood in all the glory and majesty of His kingdom and power in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, "Fear not, . . . I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore . . . and have the keys of hell and of death"! The wise Christian will not seek to project himself into the unseen world before his day, and in the meantime he will find his hope and comfort, not in the peepings and mutterings of departed spirits, but in Him who has the keys of death and of Hades and who died and rose again that He might be Lord, both of the living and of the dead.

IV.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE DEAD UPON THE LIVING

Much more Christian and much more helpful and comforting than the discussion of the possibility of communication between the living and the dead is the thought of how we in this life are influenced by the memory of the noble dead, and how by Christian faith we have fellowship with them. In the Second Book of Kings we have a striking story of how the bones of the dead Elisha brought to life a dead man who was about to be buried. (II Kings 13:21.) In some nameless village of Israel the man had died. He was decently arrayed for the grave, and after the usual lamentations and warnings, was being carried by his friends to the place of sepulture. They had just arrived at the cemetery when they saw a band of marauding Moabites who were making their annual foray into the land of the Hebrews. When they saw those ruthless invaders, fear for their own lives mastered their reverence for the dead. They hastily cast the body of their friend into the first sepulchre they came to and made off for their lives. The grave into which they had cast the body happened to be that of the man of God, Elisha, recently dead and buried. As soon as the man touched

the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood up on his feet.

It is not of this extraordinary miracle that I desire to speak, but of what is suggested by it—the perennial moral miracle of the influence of the good after their death upon the living. It is good for us to pause now and then amid the rush and cares of this life, and to pay a tribute to the memory of all the righteous dead. In all cities of the world there are to be seen stately and magnificent monuments and cenotaphs which memorialize the dead of the World War. In front of these monuments and under these triumphal arches have been kindled ever burning fires, to signify that the memory of the dead shall never pass from the mind of man. But there is something more wonderful and more beautiful than that, and that is the invisible monuments, more precious by far than those of stone or marble or bronze or granite, which loving and grateful hearts have reared to the memory of the righteous dead.

In the eleventh book of Wordsworth's *Prelude,* there is a line which speaks of the "reanimating influence of memory." Perhaps that is as near as I can come to a definition or statement of my subject—the reanimating influence of memory, and, in particular, the reanimating influence of the memory of the just, for, it is forever true, as the wise man said so many ages ago, "the memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot."

There are times when we are inclined to be de-

pressed, even cynical. We say to ourselves, "What difference will it make what men think of us when we are dead? At the best, or at the worst, in a few years, perhaps in a shorter period, we shall be forgotten. Our names will be sunk in oblivion." But this is only a passing mood. It is not the real verdict of the heart. Man knows that he will be remembered by someone, and he has a dread of being remembered for evil rather than for good. Indeed, the emphasis that man places upon the memory of his friends, and upon his own memory when he is gone, is a singular witness to the depth and the power of man's belief in a future life.

Few falser words have ever been spoken than those which Mark Antony is reputed to have uttered over the body of Julius Caesar.

"The evil men do lives after them,
The good men do is oft interred with their bones."

There is a sense, of course, in which evil goes on leaving its blight and shadow even when the man who put it into operation has passed out of this world. But the inference from those words of Shakespeare, that the good men do has but a brief memory and influence compared with the evil men do, is altogether false. If Antony was thinking only of fame and reputation, there may be something in what he said. Fame and reputation are capricious, and may, and ofttimes do, pass over the good in a man's life and preserve the evil; or, they may neglect the truly honorable and useful

dead and keep fresh in the memory of mankind the names and deeds of those whose lives were infamous. Such fame and memory is altogether uncertain and capricious. Upon what accidents it rests! The destruction or the preservation of some old manuscript, the fancies or prejudices of an historian, the external chances of time or fortune, which leave one name written high, and of another leaves not a single vestige. There may be men who struggle for that sort of fame, but they pursue a shadow and embrace a mist. In a celebrated passage from *The Burial Urn,* Sir Thomas More speaks of how Herostratus lives that burnt the temple of Diana while he is almost lost that built it, and how time has spared the epitaph of Hadrian's horse, but confounded that of himself. Then he goes on to say how it is quite possible, and altogether likely, that some of the greatest and most honorable characters in history have never been heard of. It is quite possible that fame and history may exalt those who do not deserve it, while it passes by or neglects the worthy.

But when we come to the memory of the just there is no doubt about their abiding influence. No accidents of time can destroy that influence. This is the constant miracle. The dead man touched the bones of Elisha and immediately he was revived. So we touch, as it were, those who have lived before us and have passed out of this life, and whenever and wherever we touch them their memory is just, reviving, reanimating.

There may have been days with us when the Moabites came in like a flood. It may have been an

invasion of sordid motives. We were countenancing things in our life and conduct that once we would have scorned. The golden shields of high resolve and inflexible integrity were gone, and in their place we set up the shields of brass. Then, suddenly, and with no choosing of our own, we touched the life of one who had lived and died, and who thought of us only in the terms of honor and of truth. That unexpected meeting, that fortunate touch, brought us back to ourselves. The body of our dead ideals and forgotten purposes touched the bones of the sainted dead and we revived and stood up.

Or it may have been when we were drifting upon a lee shore of temptation, and all the considerations of morality and religion, and of our own welfare for this world, not to speak of the world to come, were lost sight of. All the anchors which ordinarily hold a man safe had dragged, and, although we may not have realized it at the time, we were drifting rapidly towards the rocks of destruction; when, suddenly, there gleamed on the headlands a warning beacon. It may have been just a single flash, but it was enough to make us realize our peril, the rocks of woe upon which we were driving. That flash saved us. What was it? Or, better, Who was it? Father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife, or child? And where did that sudden light burn, in what kind of a lamp? Perhaps an old portrait, or a faded letter, or a book with love's inscription; but whatever it was, and however it came, it was a messenger from God to warn us and to save

us. We touched the bones of the godly dead and lived again. One of the most powerful works of Ibsen is his *House of Rosmersholm,* in which the chief character in the play is kept back from sin by the portraits of his ancestors who looked warningly down upon him from the walls of his home.

Or, it may have been a day when the stars of faith seemed to have gone out in our heaven. The old divinities were gone, the old beliefs were crumbling, their foundations undermined by doubt or battered by the cruel enginery of life's trials and hardships and sorrows, or their foundations sapped by sin. A gloom was over our soul and all the birds that sang to us in youth were gone. But in that hour the memory of the just was our salvation. Perhaps we looked upon a portrait which hung on the wall or stood on the desk, and as we looked, the peace and calm of that soul who struggled and overcame through the blood of the Lamb was transferred to us; we opened an old Bible, its pages once smoothed by hands that long had been dust, its verses read by eyes that now behold the King in His beauty; or we sat again in the church where one whom we had loved and honored worshipped, and faith again spoke its grand music of hope and of triumph. In the words of that great hymn—

"Falls on the ear the distant triumph song,
And arms are strong and hearts are brave again."

In his Journal for February 28th, 1854, soon after his mother's death, Carlyle tells of a vision he had of

the old home, Main Hill, with mother, father, and the others getting dressed for church. "They are all gone now, vanished all their poor bits of thrifty clothes, their pious struggling efforts, their little life,—it is all away, it has all melted into the still sea, it was rounded with a sleep. Oh, pious mother, kind, good, brave, and truthful soul, as I have ever found, and more than I have elsewhere found in this world, your poor Tom, long out of his school days now has fallen very lonely, very lame and broken in this pilgrimage of his, and you cannot help him or cheer him any more. But from your grave yonder in Ecclefechan churchyard you bid him trust in God, and that also he will try, if he can understand, and do."

For us there are two practical conclusions. In the first place, the importance of an immediate response to the influence of the past and the memory of the just whenever it touches us or speaks to us. Great is its power if obeyed. Harriet Beecher Stowe relates how in that remarkable family of Beechers, the one irresistible argument and appeal of their father, Lyman Beecher, was his appeal to the memory of their mother. Great is the power of the memory of the just to cleanse and to save.

The other practical conclusion is that we ought to live so as to be worthy of being remembered. Indeed, so that we shall be remembered for that which is good. Musing once amid the graves in the beautiful Protestant Cemetery at Rome, I came suddenly and unexpectedly upon a stone on which was cut the name of a

friend of college days, and a distinguished professor of Latin, who had been at the head of the Latin Department of one of our great universities and also the director of the American Academy at Rome. He was a great teacher and a noble man, and one writing his memorial quoted words that he himself had once used of Horace, "Friendly, kindly, genial, he has achieved what Tacitus says should be the object of every man's insatiable ambition—he has left a 'happy memory' of himself."

Let us strive to live so that we shall leave behind us a happy and blessed memory of ourselves.

"Only the actions of the just,
Smell sweet to heaven,
And blossom in the dust."

There are only two great societies on earth and in heaven, the noble living and the noble dead.

As for the noble dead themselves, I often think of those words that St. Paul wrote to Philemon concerning the fugitive slave who had robbed his master Philemon at Colosse and fled to Rome, where he was converted by St. Paul. The high-minded apostle felt that he must send him back to his master. In the beautiful letter which he wrote to Philemon, and which was carried by Onesimus under his robe, Paul asks Philemon to receive him back, not as a slave merely but as a Christian brother, "For," he says, "perhaps, therefore, he departed for a season that thou mightest receive him forever." What Paul said there about the

separations of this life is true in the providence of God of all separations; but in a particular sense it is true of the separation of death. How true it is that our friends have been parted from us for a season that we might have them forever.

Here, when they were by our side in this world, sweet though the fellowship was, there was always a shadow falling across their path. It was the shadow of the possible and inevitable separation that we dreaded; or the shadow of some accident, or spiritual disaster, that might befall them. But now there they are, ours forever; in the Kingdom forever! No more do we worry about what death can do to them and us; no longer do we dread lest accident or sickness, or disaster of soul, should overtake them. No longer do we dread to mark the decline of the powers of the mind, or the changes of time which leave their mark in body and in spirit. They are beyond the contagion of this world's slow stain.

> "He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
> Envy and calumny and hate and pain
> And that unrest which men miscall delight,
> Can touch him not and torture not again;
> From the contagion of the world's slow stain
> He is secure, and now can never mourn
> A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain;
> Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
> With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn."[1]

1. Shelley, *Ode on Keats.*

After the death of his wife Samuel Johnson wrote this beautiful prayer:

"O Lord, Governor of heaven and earth, in whose hands are embodied and departed spirits, if Thou has ordained the souls of the dead to minister to the living, and appointed my departed wife to have care of me, grant that I may enjoy the good effects of her attention and ministration, whether exercised by appearance, impulses, dreams, or in any other manner agreeable to Thy government; forgive my presumption, enlighten my ignorance, and however meaner agents are employed, grant me the blessed influences of Thy Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Whether or not it is possible for the departed friends to minister to us by "appearance, impulses, or dreams," there is no doubt that the recollection of a pure and noble soul who has passed within the veil can exercise a salutary, comforting, and inspiring influence upon the living in this world.

V.

THE OCCUPATIONS OF HEAVEN

What will men do in that future existence? We can be sure that the occupations of heaven will be in keeping with the greatness of man's redeemed nature. Matthew Arnold was certain that the strength and character of his noble father, the famous Thomas Arnold of Rugby, would find some suitable outlet:

> "Somewhere surely afar,
> In the sounding labor house vast
> Of Being, is practised that strength.
> Zealous, beneficent, firm . . . .
> Still thou performest the word of the Spirit,
> In whom thou dost live."[1]

And Tennyson was sure that Wellington would find "nobler work to do than when he fought at Waterloo."

But what, we wonder, will that work, that occupation be? There is no more sin, no more misery, no more poverty, no more violence. All the beneficent labor of mankind we relate to the misery and sin of mankind. But since all that has passed away, we won-

1. Matthew Arnold, *Rugby Chapel.*

der what the occupations of redeemed spirits will be. The mind of man will undoubtedly experience the same expansion and transformation as his body, and it is altogether within the realm of the possible that Christ, Who is the Truth, will open new worlds of truth to the mind of man. It was the fancy of Isaac Watts that Christ would gather together the redeemed in heaven and tell them some of those great things which He said to His disciples He was not able to tell them now in this life. In his sermon on *The Happiness of Separate Spirits,* he says:

"Perhaps you will suppose there is no such service as hearing sermons, that there is no attendance upon the Word of God there. But are we sure there are no such entertainments? Are there no lectures of Divine wisdom and grace given to the younger spirits there, by spirits of a more exalted station? Or, may not our Lord Jesus Christ Himself be the everlasting Teacher of his church? May he not at solemn seasons summon all heaven to hear him publish some new and surprising discoveries which have never yet been made known to the ages of nature or of grace, and are reserved to entertain the attention, and to exalt the pleasure of spirits advanced to glory? Must we learn all by the mere contemplation of Christ's person? Does he never make use of speech to the instruction and joy of saints above? — Or, it may be, that our blessed Lord (even as he is man) has some noble and unknown way of communicating a long discourse, or a long train of ideas and discoveries to millions of blessed spirits at

once, without the formalities of voice and language, and at some peculiar seasons he may thus instruct and delight his saints in heaven."

A man once asked the great mathematician, President Hill of Harvard, what he would do when he got to heaven. "Do?" he said, "there are enough problems, mathematical problems, connected with the arc of a circle to keep me busy for a thousand years." But more wonderful than mathematical exploration and discovery will be the mind's exploration of the nature and the love of God.

The highest occupation is love, and we are told that the Lamb is the light of heaven. "The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it." Sacrificial love is to be the law and the life of that heavenly world. This brings us to speak of its social joys and fellowships. Heaven is described chiefly as a place of music and of song. Wandering one morning by the banks of the Itchen, and hearing the sweet music of the birds, Isaac Walton exclaimed, "Lord, if Thou hast provided such music for sinners upon earth, what hast Thou in store for Thy saints in heaven?" Yes, at His right hand there are pleasures evermore, and not the least among these pleasures will be the pleasures of social joy.

Cicero and Socrates both looked forward to the opportunity to talk with the illustrious dead. "Oh, glorious day! when I shall depart to that divine company and assemblage of spirits, and quit this troubled and polluted scene!" If that could be said by

a pagan, how much more by a Christian? Think of an opportunity to converse with Moses and Samuel and David and Daniel and St. Peter and St. John and St. Paul.

But perhaps even more delightful will be the opportunity to meet and talk with friends whom we have loved and lost. A few days before his death, Thomas Jefferson told his daughter Martha, that in a certain drawer she would find something which he had written for her. On a slip of paper were a few lines. In them there was no classical reference or philosophical speculation, but the simple statement of the hope, that on the shore "Which crowns all my hopes, or which buries my care" he would find awaiting him "two seraphs long shrouded in death," his beloved wife and his young daughter Maria.

Perhaps the crowning wonder of the future life will be the heavenly character of its inhabitants. We are come to the "spirits of just men made perfect." That is a more wonderful thing than angels who never fell. John was asked to behold and wonder, not at the seraphim or the cherubim, or the four living creatures, but at redeemed men made perfect. "These are they who have come out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Let us live, then, as the heirs of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved for us in heaven. In order that we may know our Duty, let us salute our Destiny.

"Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more:
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And death once dead, there's no more dying then."[1]

1. Shakespeare, *Sonnet* 146.